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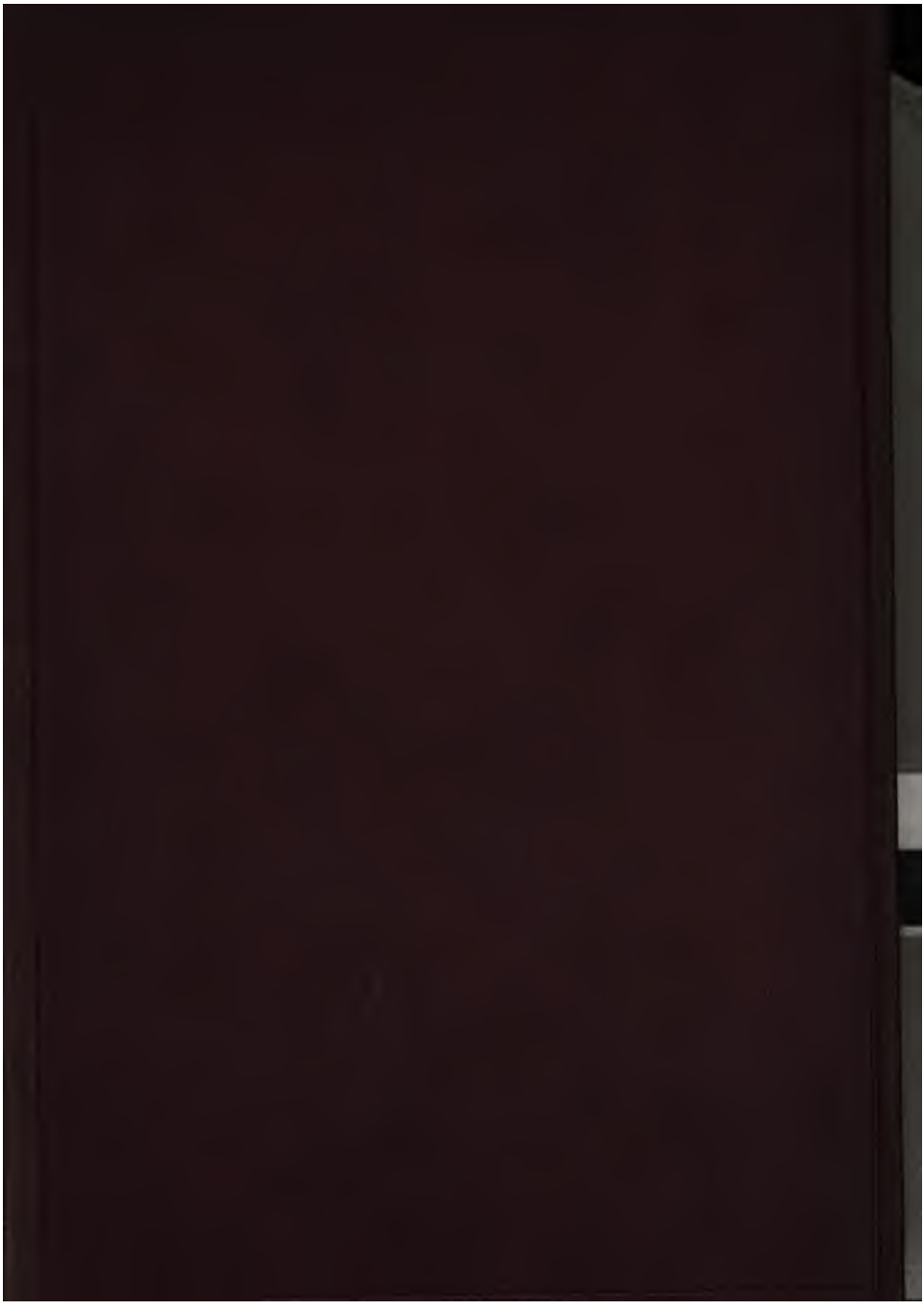

THE MYSTERY

OF THE

TEMPTATION

A Course of Lectures

BY THE

REV. W. H. HUTCHINGS, M.A.

SUB-WARDEN OF THE HOUSE OF MERCY, CLEWER

"'Tis one thing to be tempted . . . another thing to fall"

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VICAR OF S. MARY MAGDALENE, PADDINGTON

THIS VOLUME

IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED,

IN GRATEFUL ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF MUCH KINDNESS

WHICH BOTH IN WILL AND DEED

HE HAS SHEWN TOWARDS THE AUTHOR

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE thoughts which these lectures embody will be familiar to those who attended the Lent Services at S. Mary Magdalene's Church, Paddington, last year; but whilst the thoughts are the same, their order and form are different. As the Lent Course was confined to six lectures, and began on Ash-Wednesday, the lecture on "Fasting" was placed first, and the first and fourth lectures were thrown into one; they are now re-instated in their proper position, and the historic order is preserved. These lectures, having been written since their delivery—partly from some notes, and partly from some outlines which were taken down at the time and were kindly placed at the service of the author—will of course not be expressed in the same words as those which were then employed.

THE WARDEN'S LODGE, CLEWER,
Epiphany, 1875.

CONTENTS.

LECTURE I.

PAGE

The Entrance into the Temptation 1

LECTURE II.

The Fast 32

LECTURE III.

The Personality of Satan 69

LECTURE IV.

The First Temptation 104

LECTURE V.

The Second Temptation 141

LECTURE VI.

The Third Temptation 182

LECTURE VII.

The End of the Temptation 230

LECTURE I.

The Entrance into the Temptation.

"*Then was* JESUS *led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.*"—MATT. iv. 1.

THE force of CHRIST'S Example depends very much on the fact that He was susceptible of, and subjected to, temptation; for an example appeals to us with greater persuasiveness, the more closely the conditions under which it is produced resemble our own. CHRIST'S Example, had He known no conflict, would still have claimed the attention and deference of the human mind, as a Divinely-authorised representation of a perfect Manhood; but, unless He, Who held up to the world the Ideal, had Himself tasted the bitterness of the struggles of Humanity, His Example would not have touched man's heart.

The power of example arises from a fellow-

ship of experiences,—from the presence of some common ground between the one who gives the example and the one who is to follow it. Virtues manifested without a struggle, if they do not serve as an excuse for the shortcomings of those who can only produce them after a hard conflict, at least can hardly be expected to excite a hopeful imitation. We feel it would be unfair to place together the flower from the hothouse and the bloom from the common hedge; the circumstances which have favoured the former are too different from those under which the latter has contrived to grow, to admit of a comparison between them. It is not the general who, like David of old, tarries still at Jerusalem 'when kings go forth to battle,' whose conduct is likely to inspire his soldiers with courage; but it is the leader who presents himself in the midst of the battle who animates his followers with confidence as they meet the foe. Thus common experiences, as they justify the claim to propose an example, at the same time invest it with a sincerity, an attractiveness, and an attainableness which are real elements of its strength.

The Temptation has, then, an importance, not

only as one of the Mysteries of the Life of CHRIST, but also in its bearing on the exemplary efficacy of His Life as a whole. Whatever capacity for temptation CHRIST possessed in the wilderness, the same remained with Him throughout the whole course of His Life. The Temptation, it is true, manifested this liability in a singular manner, and was a crisis of condensed opposition to His Mission on the side of the powers of evil; but it was only an extreme and perhaps visible form of what was going on continually in a lesser degree, and indirectly, and from other causes. Thus to vindicate the Temptation from the criticism which would regard it simply as the product of an excited imagination, or as a visionary transaction, is not only to rescue a passage in the history of CHRIST from a degrading interpretation, but it is to preserve His Example within the range of our sympathies and aspirations.

The main object of the following Lectures is to maintain the reality of CHRIST'S Temptation. We shall consider the entrance into the Temptation; the Fast; the reality of the Temptation on the side of the Tempter; his personality and formidableness as a Foe; the susceptibility

to temptation in JESUS CHRIST, viewed successively in relation to the three assaults; and, lastly, the final victory with which the struggle terminated. In thus travelling through the Mystery, we shall pause from time to time to notice the spiritual or moral lessons which lie in our road. Our thoughts will first be directed to those circumstances of the event, which form an introduction to the Mystery, and are, as it were, the material setting of the Truth we shall afterwards contemplate.

"Then was JESUS led up of the Spirit into the wilderness." We have here recorded the time of the Temptation, the influence under which CHRIST was conducted to the scene of conflict, and the nature of the place.

I. Our LORD retired to the desert immediately after His Baptism, and then the Temptation commenced; yet the exact point of its commencement is not certain. S. Matthew's account seems rather to imply that the Temptation began after the forty days' fast, whilst S. Mark and S. Luke* say that the Temptation continued throughout the forty days. All are agreed that the recorded temptations did not

* S. Mark i. 13; S. Luke iv. 2.

take place until the end, it may be, the last day of the long fast; but different opinions have been entertained about S. Mark's and S. Luke's statements. Some have understood them to refer to certain invisible and ordinary temptations, to which CHRIST had been subjected throughout His abode in the desert; others have regarded them as simply instances of a succinct and proleptic mode of narration. One of old, taking the former view, says that "the invisible temptations were too many to be recorded," and ventures to employ in reference to them the hyperbolical language of S. John, that "had they all been revealed, the world itself could not contain the books which would be written." We may safely conclude that the words of one Evangelist supply what was wanting in the other, and therefore that our LORD'S Life in the wilderness was one in some sense of constant temptation, and that the assaults with which that mysterious period closed, were but the visible culminations of a protracted struggle. Such an interpretation seems the only one which can satisfy the inspired account of the Divine purpose: "He was led up of the Spirit into the wilderness *to be tempted.*" Temptation then,

first invisible and then visible, followed closely upon the Baptism of CHRIST.

The time of the Temptation reveals at the outset one object of the Temptation. A writer of the last century gave as one of his reasons for rejecting the literal interpretation of the Temptation, that he could see "no good end" that "would be answered by it, either with respect to CHRIST or His followers," and this objection has been brought up again. It is important, then, from a critical as well as from a practical point of view, to dwell upon 'the ends' of this Mystery. Instead of being barren, it seems to be fertile in purposes, and one of these was the unveiling of the tactics of the Evil One; it was "for a precaution to us." In the time, order, and method of the outward assaults we see what is to be expected in the hidden conflicts of the soul. After His Baptism, after the descent of the SPIRIT, after the declaration of Sonship through the voice of the FATHER, after the solemn inauguration of His Public Ministry, Satan, in an especial manner, approached to tempt CHRIST. When we have received an increase of grace, the Evil One draws near to rob us of the

treasure, as pirates attack those vessels which seem to be heavily laden with merchandise. Not that CHRIST was capable of receiving new grace from without; for He was Himself the Fountain of grace, and in His Human Nature differed from all others, in that the Spirit was not given by measure unto Him; but He, Who increased in wisdom and stature, could develope latent spiritual power, and manifest it in greater measure. His Baptism would in other respects correspond with such experiences in the life of the Christian, as the reception of a Sacrament, the entrance upon a new state of life, a fresh realisation of the grace of adoption, the witness of the Spirit, the putting into exercise a vocation which had been hitherto but a secret thought and longing. Whatever might have been the temptations which JESUS had known in the peaceful Home at Nazareth, the Tempter did not put forth his strength against Him, until that mysterious consecration for His Work had taken place on the banks of Jordan. The opening of Heaven from above was followed by the opening of Hell from beneath. It was when the sons of GOD came to present themselves before the LORD, then Satan came also

amongst them. The attack upon CHRIST at such a time was to be a precaution to us, lest we should think any place, time, or season so holy as to be exempt from the Tempter's power. The necessity of preparation in order to receive aright the means of grace is an admitted truth, and that thanksgiving should be offered when the gift has been bestowed is also practically acknowledged; but that, besides these, a spirit of watchfulness is of the greatest moment afterwards is not so commonly remembered. We have not only to make ourselves ready to receive, and then to give thanks for, the gift when received, but also to guard the treasure afterwards. So again, we must not think it strange if, when we have begun well, we fall into divers temptations; for the more we resist sin and work for GOD, the keener will become the opposition of the Enemy. "Against those who are being sanctified the temptations of the Devil thicken, because he is more eager to gain a victory over the holy." The son of Sirach had already given the same warning. "My son, if thou come to serve the LORD, prepare thy soul for temptation."*

* Eccl. ii. 1.

Thus it may be that, when we are expecting peace and joy, we have suddenly to enter into struggles, darkness, and desolation. When the echoes of the voice from Heaven have scarcely died away, and when the light of the Holy Dove has hardly been withdrawn, and the cleansing stream dried up, the boding form of the Evil One draws nigh to harass the soul.

GOD has, however, an object in permitting the assaults of Satan at such a time. It may seem at first that we are exposed to the attacks of some marauder, who is under no laws, and knows no limits to his power; and if Satan were an Evil Principle, and beyond the control of Divine Providence, and not a creature of GOD, such a dread might be reasonable, and temptation might be an unmixed evil; but, on the contrary, it must be remembered that, as Satan is an instrument of GOD, the trial is from GOD, Who permits it, and has arranged it, in order to keep the soul low, when, from the very presence of the gift or Divine favour, there may be a risk of self-exaltation:—"And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of

Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure."* Thus the Apostle, who had been caught up within the Everlasting Doors, and had heard words unutterable in this lower sphere, was subjected to some humiliating trial, lest his humility should be endangered. A temptation, which is a witness to our corruption, is a counterpoise to the elevating effect of some Divine gift, and by occupying the soul in resistance, it calls away its attention from the growth of graces. GOD hides, so to speak, the rising fabric of the spiritual life, lest the sight of it should, by engendering pride, shake the foundation. Whilst, then, on the one hand, we must be vigilant, and expect the approach of the enemy when there is something to lose, knowing that "the thief cometh not but for to steal;"† on the other, we must not allow temptations to produce despondency or dismay, but remember that they are allowed by GOD, and are a part of that great law of His Providence whereby evil is made to minister to and to be productive of good—a law the working out of some part of which He assigns to each one of His moral agents.

* 2 Cor. xii. 7. † S. John x. 10.

II. From the time of the temptation we pass to the consideration of the influence under which CHRIST was led to the scene of conflict. "Then was JESUS led up of the Spirit." It has been suggested that this expression forms the introduction to a vision, and is equivalent to such statements as, "I was in the Spirit on the LORD'S day;"* or, "The hand of the LORD was upon me, and carried me out in the Spirit of the LORD, and set me down in the midst of the valley which is full of bones;"† and that therefore we are to infer that our LORD was carried into the wilderness only in imagination, and not in reality. There are two objections to this mode of dealing with the narrative. First, it does not take into account the different character of the compositions in which these phrases are found. When we read the book of Ezekiel, or of the Revelation, we are prepared for allegory and vision; but when we read the Holy Gospels, we expect the events which are recorded to be historical, unless we are told that they are not. Secondly, the expressions themselves are not equivalent, so that on grammatical grounds the comparison is untenable.

* Rev. i. 10. † Ezek. xxxvii. 1.

The citation from the Revelation (which approaches most nearly to the language of S. Luke) lacks the article, and that in Ezekiel, which has a less resemblance to the words we are considering, has the same omission. There is a material difference between the expression "led up of the Spirit" and the expression "carried out in Spirit."* The preposition which S. Matthew employs denotes the agency through which any action is accomplished, whether personal or not. The verb†—the simple form in S. Luke, and the compound in S. Matthew—is employed by the Evangelists in other places in its natural sense, as *e.g.*, "they brought him to Jerusalem," and they "led him into their council;" and from its signification of leading from a lower to a higher position, it came to have a nautical application, and thus, as a vessel leaving the shore seems to rise, it is frequently used in the Acts of the Apostles for 'setting sail' or 'launching forth.' Whether, then, we regard the inadmissibility of a vision into the Gospel narrative without a note of warning to inform us that we are passing from the solid ground of fact into the

* Ezek. xxxvii. 1; S. Luke ii. 27. † ἀνήχθη, ἤγετο.

mystic region of allegory; or, whether we examine the effort to find in the text the notion of a rapture—an effort which, as some have candidly admitted, was prompted by the desire to avoid the difficulties of the literal interpretation rather than by the demands of the text itself—the conclusion which we arrive at must be the same; viz., that the Temptation is as truly history as any other portion of the Gospels, and must be interpreted after the same manner as any other Mystery of our LORD'S Life.

Moreover, the Temptation is circumstantially recorded by two Evangelists, and mentioned by a third; and its power as an experience is appealed to by S. Paul in the Epistle to the Hebrews. This fulness of revelation, whilst it betokens the momentousness of an event, is also usually an indication of its reality as an actual occurrence. The desire to reduce the Temptation to a vision, whether it be a vision diabolical or Divine, often springs from a want of perception as to the place and importance of this Mystery in the Life of CHRIST; unless, indeed, there is a disbelief in the personality of the Tempter, or some false notion as to the Natures of the Tempted; but in the text itself we unhesi-

tatingly state that there is no reasonable ground for giving to this event a different handling from that which we employ in interpreting the rest of the Gospel. By being "led up of the Spirit into the wilderness" we understand, then, a local movement from one spot to another.

We now proceed further to regard the source and limits of the influence through which CHRIST entered into the Temptation. The Spirit under whose guidance CHRIST was conducted into the desert was the HOLY SPIRIT. It is evident that the Evangelists intend us to understand the Heavenly Mover to be the same SPIRIT as the one who in the form of a dove just before abode upon CHRIST. The connection in S. Luke's Gospel is still more clear than in the other Evangelists: "And Jesus being full of the HOLY GHOST returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness."* To suppose that the Evil Spirit is here meant is to charge the sacred Scriptures with a most misguiding use of words, and, in addition, to forget that the term 'spirit' without an attribute is scarcely more than once throughout the whole of the Scriptures used for the Evil One. Moreover, the concurrence of

* S. Luke iv. 1.

the Holy Spirit with this action is fully in accord with other notices of His relations with the Incarnate LORD. CHRIST was conceived through the operation of the HOLY GHOST, and the Spirit dwelt in, and co-operated with, the Sacred Humanity in all its actions. Under the guidance of the Spirit JESUS preached. He says Himself, "The Spirit of the LORD is upon me, because He hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor,"* &c. "He returned" from the Temptation "in the power of the Spirit into Galilee."† When He wrought miracles He attributed the victory over the evil spirits to the power of the HOLY GHOST—"If I cast out devils by the Spirit of GOD;"‡ so under the guidance of the same Spirit He went into the wilderness. The SPIRIT, Who was "the Principle of His Natural Life, the Guide of His Hidden Life, became also the Inspirer of His Public Life." In the withdrawal into the desert, His co-operation with CHRIST is more especially recorded, in that as it was the first act of our LORD after the Spirit's Presence in Him had been revealed, it was to serve as an illustration and specimen

* S. Luke iv. 18. † S. Luke iv. 14.
‡ S. Matt. xii. 28.

of all that would follow; and was more positively affirmed in this instance, as the going forth to meet temptation might have been the one act in which the SPIRIT'S guidance would have been otherwise distrusted or denied. CHRIST was always led by the SPIRIT, and on special occasions willed to make His concurrence known. We are further justified in interpreting the words "by the Spirit" to mean 'by the HOLY GHOST,' by the fact that we are in this following the almost universal opinion of commentators. Indeed, in one ancient version the title "HOLY GHOST" forms a part of the text—'He was led up by the HOLY GHOST.'

It will be necessary now to consider the extent of the SPIRIT'S influence. The three Evangelists employ three different words to express this influence. The stronger term is used by S. Mark, "The Spirit driveth Him."* S. Matthew says, JESUS was "led up." S. Luke, "was led."† From the language of S. Mark, we must not conclude that CHRIST went into the desert by compulsion, but by voluntary accordance with an inward impulse. The word

* S. Mark i. 12, ἐκβάλλει. † S. Luke iv. 1.

may be so explained when used of moral agents, as *e.g.* "pray ye therefore the LORD of the harvest, that He will *send forth* labourers into His harvest."* This 'sending forth' does not imply an enforced service, but a call of grace to missionary labour. At the same time, so strong a term brings out the joyous and triumphant character of the Spirit's movements. "There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of GOD."† 'The river' represents in mystic language, the Holy Spirit, the "pure river of water of life, proceeding out of the Throne of GOD and of the Lamb;"‡ the 'city of GOD' is the Holy Humanity, which is gladdened by its streams, and borne onward by its currents. Whilst one Evangelist notes the activity, the expression of the other is rather suggestive of the calmness of the influence which the SPIRIT exerted over the Human Soul of CHRIST. The combined sweetness and energy of that SPIRIT, who "knows no tardy movements," is thus portrayed. That JESUS should be led by the SPIRIT was a primary example and illustration of what would be

* S. Luke x. 2. † Psalm xlvi. 4.
‡ Rev. xxii. 1.

repeated in His members; "for as many as are led by the SPIRIT of GOD, they are the sons of GOD;"* and that the action of the SPIRIT should be so complete, that He should be said to be driven by it, is not surprising, when we bear in mind that the SPIRIT in CHRIST did not receive any hindrances or feeble co-operations as in us, but had full play, and was met by perfect correspondence with His promptings. The stream which has been checked in its progress by many a weir, and has had to make its way through rough and shallow places, and has lost its wandering waters through many a broken bank or marshy border, will at last run but feebly; whereas the river, which has known neither waste nor hindrance, but on the contrary has been fed by tributary springs, will flow on in depth and width with a calm and majestic force. The springs of grace which in us too often share the fate of the dwindling stream, in the Soul of JESUS have such free course that they are said to 'drive' Him, through their unrestrained and welcomed impetus.

The influence which led CHRIST into temptation again reminds us that this Mystery was

* Rom. viii. 14.

"for a precaution to us." We are taught that we must not enter into temptation unless it be under the guidance of the SPIRIT of GOD; not only because in the strength of GOD alone we can hope to conquer, but also because we are not justified in meeting temptations except when they come to us in the path of Providence. Nay more, there are temptations which we must flee from when we find ourselves exposed to them (as Lot fled from Sodom), a hankering look upon which incurs Divine punishment. Temptations are of two kinds—voluntary and involuntary. The latter can be always overcome, if the right weapons are duly used. To each temptation which is a predestined part of our day of trial, there is an accompanying grace whereby we may resist it; but if, contrary to GOD'S Providence, we expose ourselves to temptations, we have then no promise of protection; for, it is written, he that loveth danger shall perish in it. The conflict with Satan in the case of JESUS CHRIST lay in the very thoroughfare of His Mission; for "for this purpose the SON of GOD was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil."*

* 1 John iii. 8.

CHRIST, as the Second Adam, must overcome the Tempter, and undo the effects of the overthrow of the first Adam. He foreknew that the issues of the temptation would be to the glory of GOD and the benefit of man. Whilst then GOD is faithful, and will not suffer us to be tempted beyond that we are able, provided that the temptations are inevitable; on the other hand, if we expose ourselves unnecessarily to temptations, GOD will permit us to fall, thereby punishing the spirit of pride and presumption, or of carelessness, which caused us to imagine that we were strong enough for all things. Indeed, to go unnecessarily into an occasion of sin, even though we do not fall through it, is itself sometimes a sin, and in some cases a grievous one. To pray, "Lead us not into temptation," and then wilfully to enter the place, associate in the company, read the book, or continue the conversation, of which we know that sin has before been the result, is to belie our own petitions, and to tempt GOD. If it be asked, 'How is it to be known whether a temptation is a part of GOD'S appointment or a self-sought danger?' it may be replied, that—if any evident duty involve with it temptations,

we must not on that account shrink from undertaking it; but if we foresee a temptation, the avoidance of which would entail no abandonment of duty, it is ordinarily right to flee from it. But this is only a general rule; for it is impossible, except from experience or guidance, oftentimes to decide what course should be pursued. It is often after many falls that the soul ascertains where the buoys should be placed to mark the dangerous points in the spiritual chart; and only after exercising the gifts of the SPIRIT and the virtue of prudence, that, in particular instances, caution can be distinguished from cowardice. And there are, it may be, times of doubt when we must be content to act simply and with a pure intention. However, when the occasion of sin is itself an attraction, a pleasure to nature, and half-way, as it were, towards the actual sin, and no call of duty brings us in its path, there can be no question then but that it is a *voluntary* temptation, and that to place oneself in the way of it, is to trifle with sin, with the soul, and with GOD. The SPIRIT'S movements are often to be known by their contrariety to our inclinations, and still lead to solitude,

mortification, and hiddenness of life; whereas nature craves companions, life, ease, and display. The triumphant movement in CHRIST towards the conflict, as the Representative of mankind, is repeated, and continued in different ways and degrees in His members; and it is only when we are thus 'led by the Spirit of GOD' that we can claim the Temptation for our model, or hope for victory over the Foe.

III. It remains for us now to turn our thoughts to the place whither CHRIST was led, and His reasons for sojourning in the desert. The traditional site is between the mount of Olives and Jericho, "about five hours' march from Jerusalem." It is thus described by a traveller: "From Bethany, after some hours' travel, you arrive at the mountainous desert into which our Beloved Saviour was led by the Spirit, to be tempted by the Devil. A most miserable barren place it is, consisting of high rocky mountains, so torn and disordered as if the earth had here suffered some great convulsion." Some, however, have thought the great desert of Arabia to be the one referred to in the sacred narrative, both because of its greater solitude, and also from the fact that the fast of

CHRIST would thus more conspicuously correspond with that of Moses and Elijah.

It is not, however, the geographical position, but the character of the place, which is of importance; that it was a desert—a place rugged and uncultivated, the haunt of wild beasts, untraversed by man, and destitute of human comforts and necessaries, is evident from Holy Scripture; but as to the exact spot—as in the case of so many other sites which are of sacred interest—we must either accept the tradition, or remain for ever in doubt. That the desert called "Quarantana" was the scene of the Temptation is an old tradition, not dating merely from the Crusades, though then naturally brought into prominence, but existing previously in the East. Thus, then, as GOD'S ancient people were tempted in the wilderness, so CHRIST, whom Israel typified, passed through a similar experience; and the language of the Old Testament may be applied to the place of CHRIST'S sojourn—"He found him in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness; he led him about, he instructed him, he kept him as the apple of his eye."*

* Deut. xxxii. 10.

CHRIST willed to meet the Tempter in the wilderness, that by His unassisted might the victory should be won: in this, as in other sufferings of His Life, He could say, "I have trodden the winepress alone."* The circumstances of the Temptation, independent of the suffering of Temptation itself, constituted a real suffering. Adam was tempted in Eden; CHRIST, in a wilderness. Our LORD had not, as the Baptist, been in the deserts till His showing unto Israel, but had lived at home. However hard the life at Nazareth was, it had the sweetness of home-life in it, and of such a Home too! The first thirty years of life are said to shape human opinion and habit into a permanent mould. For CHRIST to pass from the companionship of His Blessed Mother, and from all with whom He was familiar, and who were naturally dear to Him, into a desert for forty days and nights, was itself a bitter suffering to human nature. The first separation from home-life is painful, when it is only a change of place and companionships, as many may remember, without any violent contrast of circumstances, and with a return in prospect; or, even when,

* Isaiah lxiii. 3.

though to some extent it does involve a contrast of circumstances, there are nevertheless in our new abode warm sympathies and common experiences to be found to soothe our aching hearts; what then must have been the cost to the Heart of JESUS in this sudden transition from Nazareth to the desert; what the detachment, which He exercised, as He joyfully fulfilled His Mission—passing from the waters of Jordan into solitude, mortification, and trial! Thus did JESUS drink of that cup of human sorrows, in which changes and separations form a considerable element of bitterness.

By His withdrawal into the wilderness CHRIST sanctified times of Retreat, and states of retirement from the world for contemplation. The successive stages of His Life are like rays from a central sun, each illuminating and cheering some distinct and widening district of humanity. His Life at Nazareth sanctifies home-life; His Life in the desert, contemplative life; His Life in His ministry, active life; His Life in His Passion, suffering life: each vocation finds its point of contact in some phase of His Representative Life; each age of the Church repro-

duces more especially some one feature of His universal character.

This is a truth of the utmost importance. It is the forgetfulness of this truth, which causes one generation to malign another, and one vocation to look with contempt or jealously upon another. It is the forgetfulness of this truth, which has made the moral maxims of the gospel appear inapplicable to modern conditions of society, and the outward renunciation of all things seem to be the only way of following CHRIST. That 'there are diversities of gifts,'* 'differences of administrations,' and 'diversities of operations,' is not taken into account, but all are measured by the same spiritual standard. The fundamental principles of Christian life are one and the same, but their outward expression and degree of application are diverse, according to differences of vocation, aptitude, and circumstance.

But whilst we bear in mind that each life has a special fitness for copying a particular part of the Redeemer's Life, others are not excluded from having a share in the imitation of the same part; and thus our LORD'S with-

* 1 Cor. xii. 4.

drawal into the desert may be regarded as sanctioning the practice of Retreats for those who at other times are in the midst of active duties. We may feel assured that our LORD retired for the purpose of prayer as well as fasting, and that He who recommended the union of prayer and fasting was Himself at that time an example of both those duties.

Times of Retreat are necessary for deepening in the mind the impression of the realities of the unseen world, and for quickening devotion; whilst the absence of business, cares, and of intercourse with others, leaves for a while the faculties free and unhindered for spiritual exercises. CHRIST in the desert, according to His natural powers, could be immersed in Divine things in a more perfect manner than when He was in converse with men, and occupied with material objects. To imagine that CHRIST'S actions were only exemplary, and not effectual, is to invest His Life with an air of unreality, and to weaken the bonds of sympathy which bind Him to us. Whilst holding intercourse with others, according to the laws of our nature, His human mind, imagination, organs, would be directed towards those

persons, without distraction indeed, yet with a divided exercise; but when alone, those human faculties might be solely occupied with GOD.

Holy persons pass from action to devotion without loss of recollection in either, but yet with a conscious difference in the concentration of their powers. CHRIST was perfect in both states; but a perfect absorption in Divine things belonged to the times of retirement in the wilderness, on the mountain top, or in the garden; for such an absorption as would render one inattentive to practical duties, and neglectful in fulfilling them in the midst of active life, would be a fault, and not a mark of perfection. We venture, then, to say, that unless a constant miracle were wrought, separation from the companionship of man was not only an act performed as an energetic way of teaching a truth necessary for us, but was also a conscious passage of the sacred Humanity into the stillness of the full and undivided contemplation of GOD Alone.

The retirement into the desert of our Divine LORD, before the entrance upon His Public Ministry, not only authorises periods of retreat from the world, but suggests that such exercises

are never more fitting than when they form a part of the preparation for the Ministerial Office. Thus the Apostles remained in retreat from the Day of the Ascension till the Descent of the HOLY GHOST. Thus S. Paul retired to the Arabian desert for three years after his conversion, to prepare himself for the execution of the Apostolic Office. As seasons of retreat are useful to Christians generally, so are such times especially needed by those who have not only to deepen their own lives, but to give out of their fulness to others. Also, before any important step or choice of state, such seasons of devotion are great means of obtaining light and guidance. In this respect, on another occasion, CHRIST again is our pattern: when He chose His disciples, He spent the previous night in prayer to GOD on the mountain. "He went out into a mountain, and continued all night in prayer to GOD. And when it was day, He called unto Him His disciples: and of them He chose twelve." *

The circumstances of the Mystery of the Temptation, the time when, the inward impulse by which, CHRIST was led, and the place where

* S. Luke vi. 12, 13.

it occurred, have now been considered; and some of the spiritual and moral lessons which each in turn suggested have been noticed. We have already come into contact with two of the purposes of the Temptation. It was to serve as a warning to us; first, lest we should suppose any person, time, or place so holy as to be free from the Tempter's assaults; secondly, against presuming on our own strength, and so entering into unnecessary dangers. It was for our instruction, that we might know the means which are best suited for meeting the Tempter; one of which is the withdrawal from the world, either for a time on particular occasions, or—where there is a special call to it—by a life of retirement and devotion.

No human eye beheld the mysterious struggle in the desert; but doubtless Heaven and Hell watched with intensest interest the meeting of the Prince of Light and the Prince of darkness. This Mystery was an object of faith as well to Apostles as to us. It was not like the miracles or Mysteries which had eye-witnesses at first, who were inspired to record what they saw; but it was made known by revelation to the mind of man, either from the lips of CHRIST

Himself, or by the Lights of Pentecost. It seems, then, intended that this Mystery should in a special manner exercise our faith, and be a touchstone of sound doctrine; and the various erroneous explanations which have been resorted to by successive misbelievers quite justify the statement, that a right view of the Temptation "involves the integrity of doctrine on the great Christian Mystery of the Incarnation." Let us seek, then, the light of faith, that we may be preserved from error whilst we pursue our course; and let us pray that in each step we take, we may advance under the guidance of the same Divine Person by whose influence JESUS was led into the desert.

LECTURE II.

The Fast.

"*And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, He was afterward an hungered.*"—MATT. iv. 2.

THE time of CHRIST'S Temptation, the place where it commenced, and the influence under which He was led into the wilderness, have already occupied our attention; but there is another prelude to that marvellous conflict. CHRIST prepared Himself for the struggle. We cannot regard our LORD'S Fast as—what may be termed—an unavoidable accident of His position, resulting from His abode in a place where provisions could not be obtained, for His sojourn in the wilderness was a voluntary act. It is true that He did not go into the desert for the ultimate purpose of the Fast, for He was led up into the wilderness to be tempted; yet the fast was not a mere accompaniment, but an integral part, of the complex Mystery. Both

S. Matthew and S. Luke record the duration, and the result of the fast; and the latter Evangelist adds that the fast was absolute:—"In those days he did eat nothing."* We cannot dissociate the Fast from the Temptation, for the first Temptation was rendered possible through the previous fast. Although the Fast may be treated without allusion to the Temptation, the Temptation cannot be viewed apart from the Fast. Its length forbids us from assigning to it the place simply of a preparatory discipline to the Temptation, and an inducement to the Tempter to approach. That it was such an inducement we may believe; that, as the first enemy of Israel, after the passage of the Red Sea, came upon those who were 'feeble,' 'faint and weary,'† so now, the famished condition of the Redeemer was an encouragement to the Evil One to approach; not only as affording an opportunity for a particular kind of enticement, but also as supplying a hope of possible success. The Fast, then, whether considered in itself, or in its connection with the Temptation, is of such importance as to justify us in pausing to dwell upon it at length, whilst its enforcement as a duty

* S. Luke iv. 2. † Deut. xxv. 18.

in our LORD'S Sermon on the Mount, and its obligation as a precept of the Church, make it a subject of great practical consequence. Let us first direct our thoughts to the limits of CHRIST'S Fast; secondly, to the purposes of it; and lastly, to the manner or conditions of it.

I. That the duration of CHRIST'S Fast was forty days and forty nights, the two Evangelists S. Matthew and S. Luke both certify. S. Matthew adds 'forty nights,' not merely as an expressive way of relating the length of time, or as a Jewish mode of speaking, but to record that our LORD'S Fast lasted through the nights as well as through the days; for the Jews, when they fast, as a rule eat after the going down of the sun. Thus, our LORD'S Fast lasted the same length of time as that of Moses and Elias. This fact has sometimes been noticed, for the same reason as that which causes us to trace any other fulfilment of type or prophecy in the Redeemer's History; namely, that we may see in Him the end and explanation of the Old Testament. The words, too, of Moses—"The LORD thy GOD will raise up unto thee a Prophet . . . *like unto me*,"* are also here said to

* Deut. xviii. 15.

be verified. The thought comes forcibly to us, when we contemplate our LORD as He holds converse with Moses and Elias on the Mount of Transfiguration, that the three forms which we behold in the midst of that glory have each shared the experience of a forty days' fast.

But some—instead of seeing in this resemblance, and in other correspondences of a similar kind between our LORD and those of old, a special witness to His greatness, as the One to Whom the events of the Old Testament point, and in Whom they find their meaning and accomplishment,—continue to describe Him as an imitator of the deeds of the prophets, and One Who designedly made the various actions of His life to fit in with their predictions. Such a view is untenable, for the simple reason that the main fulfilments of prophecy and type belong to our LORD'S Birth, Infancy, Passion, Death, and Resurrection, the circumstances of which were beyond any creature's arrangement and control. It was impossible to have on record types and prophecies of the Messiah without exposing the accomplishment of some of them to this charge of imitation. Yet, whilst we rebut with indignation this

attempt to weaken one of the evidences of Christianity, we must be careful to preserve that trait of beauty in CHRIST'S character,—that lowliness through which He wills not to outvie His creatures without necessity, and sometimes, therefore, condescends to reproduce their acts or words. The craving for originality, which is the offspring oftentimes of pride or love of novelty for its own sake, had no place in CHRIST. Even in the prayer, which is called by His Name, He willed to enshrine thoughts and words, already to some extent known to the Jews; and in His Sermon on the Mount He is content to use the language and metaphor with which S. John the Baptist had recently made his disciples familiar. JESUS in His lowliness wills sometimes to employ the very thoughts and forms of speech which He first as GOD had enabled His creatures to think and to speak. Thus, in His Fast, though He equals, He will not outstrip His creatures,—fasting the exact time that He had enabled Moses to fast on Sinai, and Elijah on his journey to Horeb.

And here we may notice, without entering into cabalistic interpretations or any mystical exaggeration of the importance of numbers,

how often in Holy Scripture this number 'forty' occurs: the flood lasted forty days;* forty days were "the days of those which are embalmed;"† forty days the spies took in searching the land; forty years the people of GOD were in the desert; forty days Goliath presented himself before the terrified hosts of Israel; forty years was the predicted period of Egypt's desolation, and of Judah's chastisement according to Ezekiel's type; and forty days our LORD tarried on earth before His Ascension. So many instances of the employment of this number certainly suggest the idea that it has some special meaning attached to it, and the common explanation, that it is a symbol of our whole period of probation on earth, seems at least highly probable. It is the period during which, if we sin, we draw down upon ourselves Divine chastisements; during which we are preparing for our graves; when we are wandering in the wilderness of this world; when our hopes and desires are sent before us to search the land; when we are molested by the great enemy who challenges us; and when we are liable to that desolation

* Gen. vii. 17. † Gen. l. 3.

and sorrow which in mystic language the prophet announced; and finally, it is the time of preparation for the Ascended Life, as well as the time of fasting and temptation.

But it is not simply to the length, but to the limits, of CHRIST'S Fast, that we must also direct our attention. We are not told of our LORD that He practised austerities, except in the desert. Whilst He lived at other times what—taking into account the difference between the habits and circumstances of the East and our own—must be called a hard life, yet did He not live in any unusual form an austere life. A life of toil in Nazareth; a life of toil in His Public Ministry, though toil of a different kind; a life usually without comforts from external things, and sometimes pinched for necessaries; a life familiar with weariness, and with all the hardships of a wanderer, who sometimes had not where to lay His Head—such was the Life of JESUS; but yet, with all these circumstances of trial, it was not as a whole a life of austerity, or of self-sought mortification. S. John the Baptist, as an ascetic, is placed in contrast with CHRIST: "John the Baptist came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, He hath a devil.

The Son of man is come eating and drinking."* Our LORD, in dress and manner, conformed to all harmless customs, and when at the table took what was set before Him. S. John, on the contrary, is described as appearing in "raiment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle," and eating "locusts and wild honey."†

The perfectness and universality of CHRIST'S Life did not admit of its being contracted into a single idea or type of holiness; and means of attaining holiness or of avoiding sin, which became the creature, would not be a necessity to Him. Had our LORD led the life of S. John, the notion that the creatures of GOD were in themselves bad, and to be altogether renounced, would have been confirmed, and Christianity condemned as incompatible with human affairs. His Mission involved the manifestation of Himself in daily life, and in, so to speak, society. His mode of attracting was rather by way of familiarity than of asceticism. S. John attracted in the latter way; his asceticism was his diploma, visibly authorising his rebukes—"John did no miracle."‡ Our LORD'S works of power bore

* S. Matt xi. 18, 19. † S. Matt. iii. 4.
‡ S. John x 41.

witness to Him. Our LORD, too, needed not the machinery of a rigorous austerity to attack the fuel of an evil nature, and to bring down a rebellious flesh. The continuation of a life like that in the desert might well have been taken as a token of inward corruption. Neither was it requisite or possible for CHRIST to add to the infinite Merit of His Passion by previously subjecting Himself to some unwonted forms of mortification, which would have placed His Life altogether out of the reach and sympathy of ordinary persons. He would, too, have lent support to the idea that holiness consisted in external practices; whereas it was one great purpose of the Redeemer to point to states of mind and heart, to moral and spiritual changes, as the very essence and pith of true perfection, and to all else as only leading towards or flowing out of that inner life of faith, hope, love, and contrition.

The ascetic, who comes with the marks of an extreme mortification, like the Baptist emerging from the deserts, stirs us with a sense of our softness by the great interval which separates his life from ours, and stands before us as a witness to the power of deep convictions. His life is an eloquent expres-

sion to us of his sincerity and courage, and thus may give the first impulse which awakens us from our worldliness. Such a Saint may have the effect of the Baptist, and become a converting power; but the Saint who, entering into common life, and manifesting his sanctity through the ordinary actions of life, performs each duty with a completeness, and bears each trial with a sweetness, and greets each joy with a calmness, and diffuses an unction of holiness through what may be commonplace, and simply acts perfectly on all occasions, is after all the Saint that has a sustained influence and charm. Our LORD combines both; but the former is only a passing phase of His history, imparting to asceticism His grace and authority, sanctioning it as a life, or as an element in the formation of a true life; but the latter is His normal life, whereby He teaches perfection to all. Our LORD represented in an extreme form the life of mortification in the desert, gathering, as it were, into the forty days what in us would be spread out in a fainter form through our life, as He gathered His bodily Sufferings into the last hours of His Passion, having been previously free

from the pains of disease. We remember mostly what lasts long, or is again and again repeated; but with the experiences of the SON of GOD it is different. Each passing condition not only leaves its indelible mark on the memory of CHRIST, but is still, as it were, a distinct consciousness, a living fountain of merit and of sympathy. Whilst, then, we are now dwelling upon our LORD in the wilderness, watching Him as He fulfilled the Psalmist's description, "My knees are weak through fasting; my flesh is dried up for want of fatness,"* we must not allow the sight to cause us for a moment to entertain the idea that Christianity must in all cases be modelled upon a forbidding asceticism; but we must remember the *limits* of the Fast, and that He who sanctioned austerity was also afterwards present at the marriage festival, and joined in occasions of social mirth, and "came eating and drinking."

II. We will now pass to the consideration of some of the purposes of CHRIST'S Fast. Our LORD had a work to undo as well as to do.

(1.) And first, let us see the purpose in this

* Ps. cix. 24.

suffering in reference to the past. Fasting was not in CHRIST the fulfilment of any Jewish law. The Jews were in the habit of fasting, as a cursory glance at the Old Testament shows. The day of Atonement was their annual fast. In later times other public fasts were added—the fasts of the fourth, fifth, seventh, and tenth months. Besides these, the Sabbath had the character of a fast. There were also laws of abstinence concerning various kinds of food, and all leaven was forbidden for a week at the Passover. The Pharisees added two weekly fasts, a fact which our LORD does not omit to mention in His portraiture of a self-righteous member of that sect. But the Jews had no long fasts, and consequently the Fast in the desert could have had no reference to Levitical obligations. Our LORD was by His Fast investing fasting with a fresh efficacy; He was doing in Person what He would reiterate in His members. His Fast in relation to the past was a satisfaction for sin. The first sin was the violation of a law of abstinence; His Fast was an expression of sorrow for that transgression, and for all the sins of gluttony and intemperance which result from that first indulgence.

Fasting may even be a natural effect of sorrow. So closely are soul and body webbed together, that whatever deeply touches the one affects the other. We know from experience that in bitter grief, at the time of any great bereavement, we are less concerned about bodily necessities. Fasting and mourning go together. When the soul is smitten with a sense of sin—the deepest sorrow of which we are capable—its accompaniment is indifference to bodily comforts, or even necessaries. "My heart," says the psalmist, "is smitten, and withered like grass; so that I forget to eat my bread."* So in the exhortation, "Turn ye even unto me with all your heart, and with fasting,"† the order is the same. The heart is first wounded, and then its secret sorrow is unveiled through the body's partnership in the act of repentance. The whole inward being turns to GOD, and then the outward withdraws itself from created delights. It is the same with worship: it commences in the aspirations and affections of the soul, and then transpires through the bodily expression of it. Mental absorption in any pursuit or enjoyment, may, though in a different way,

* Psalm cii. 4. † Joel ii. 12.

produce the same result. The author of the *Imitation* tells us of those who, "through the great sweetness they enjoyed in prayer, sometimes even forgot their bodily necessities."* There are those, too, who, through intense application in worldly business, in pursuit of gain or from ambition, eat the bread of carefulness, or even forego a meal to give themselves more continuously to their employment. But these are different from the former: when sorrow produces abstinence, it is because the body is actually affected by the grief of the soul, and is not merely postponed on behalf of other interests.

But fasting as a natural effect of sorrow will be of rare occurrence, happening, perhaps, in a soul burdened with a crime or some grievous sin, and only just awakened to its enormity; or in the case of a great calamity, when a nation, like Nineveh of old, is bowed down before its GOD. Fasting in reference to the past will ordinarily be undertaken as a penitential exercise. We cannot doubt but that CHRIST'S Fast was an expression of sorrow, as well as a penance ex-

* *Imitation*, bk. i. ch. xviii. "Library of Spiritual Works." Rivingtons.

ternally imposed by Himself. The mourning and fasting which are blended in the prophecies of the Psalter find in Him their fullest realisation. That He should be said to hunger only when the forty days had expired, not only proclaims that His exhausted Humanity had hung upon the Life of His Higher Nature, but also denotes the previous concentration of His Soul upon spiritual interests. Our LORD had just been called the Lamb of GOD that taketh away the sin of the world; and now He bears the sins of the people, like the scapegoat, into the wilderness. Such a sorrow for sin had never before been presented to GOD; and it was a sorrow prompted only by charity, in which self had no share and no need. Expressions of sorrow for past sin had been offered not only in the ordinary Ritual of the Jews, but also on great emergencies and national calamities. Fasting had especially this aspect of old: it regarded the past; but such a sorrow as that which Jesus offered was before unknown. It was a sorrow assumed for others, and rendered boundless in its extent and efficacy through the Divine Nature.

The Second Adam then atoned for the sin of

the first; His Fast had a retrospective effect, and we in like manner can fast in union with Him, and thus put to account the grace which He obtained for us. As this relation to the past is the first view of CHRIST'S Fast, so it will be often the same with our fasts. Our fast may have a general or a particular regard to the past; it may be undertaken as an act of self-vengeance for sinful indulgence of every kind; or, it may have a specific reference to sins of sensuality, gluttony, or intemperance. Fasting is therefore sometimes called a work of satisfaction. There is no need to shrink from this term, as though its use involved some disparagement of the one "full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world." Such an idea arises from a mistake as to its theological meaning. It is wrongly supposed that by satisfaction for past sin is meant atonement for sin. No act of our own can remove the *guilt* of deadly sin, when that sin is our own, much less can it do so when it is another's sin. There is only One to Whom we look, and cry, "O Lamb of GOD, that takest away the sin of the world!" Satisfaction has relation, not to the guilt of sin, but to its

penalties. The two, guilt of sin and penalty of sin, are distinct; and the one may be removed, whilst the other, at least in a measure, remains. Moses suffered from sin when its guilt had been removed; he was forbidden to enter the land of promise through the sin at Meribah, yet we find him in the mount by the side of his Transfigured Lord. David, the pattern of penitents in the Old Testament, incurred penalties on account of his sin, far-reaching and severe, yet we have the authority of Scripture for saying the guilt of that sin had been removed. Penalties followed him to his grave; and after his death was still verified the awful utterance, "The sword shall never depart from thine house." A Divine absolution was followed by such punishments as the death of his child, war with his enemies, and division in his household. The second commandment refers to penalties, and not to guilt,* for "the son shall not bear the iniquity of the father." It is evident then, from Holy Scripture, that guilt of sin and penalties of sin are separable. It is further evident that works of penitence may affect the latter, mitigate or remove the impending

* Ezekiel xviii. 20.

punishment. An instance of both will suffice to substantiate this assertion. When Elijah pronounced the sentence of GOD against Ahab and his posterity, Ahab "rent his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his flesh, and fasted, and lay in sackcloth, and went softly." And GOD said, "Seest thou how Ahab humbleth himself before me? Because he humbleth himself before me, I will not bring the evil in his days; but in his son's days will I bring the evil upon his house."* This was an example of the effect of works of penitence on the Mind of GOD in relation to an individual and his family—a postponement, and consequently a mitigation, of the penalties. Again, when the people of Nineveh "proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth," we are told, "GOD saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and GOD repented of the evil that He had said that He would do unto them; and He did it not."† Here there is the case of a nation or people, and of the entire removal of a penalty which had been distinctly foretold.

But we must not conclude that, because works of satisfaction can be done by us, and thereby penalties arrested, whilst guilt can only be re-

* 1 Kings xxi. 29. † Jonah iii. 10.

moved through CHRIST, that therefore His Work is an Atonement for guilt, but not a perfect Satisfaction. It is both; but the two are differently applied to the individual—the twofold efficacy is by different means extended to His members. Deliverance from guilt, and restoration to the Divine Favour, has a sacramental mode of application; but deliverance from penalties is effected also by way of similitude. Penitential works in the Old Testament had their value as types of CHRIST'S Penance, and were enriched by that grace which His Life threw back upon them; penitential works in the New for past sin are wrought in union with Him, are the extension of His Work in His members, by which they put to account the grace He has purchased. "The virtue of the HOLY GHOST," says S. Cyprian, "is given to us in His own order, not according to our will." Thus we appropriate CHRIST'S Satisfaction through our own efforts, filling up, as S. Paul says, "that which is behind of the afflictions of CHRIST in my flesh."* Bear in mind that works of satisfaction are not a compensation for the guilt of sin, but only for penalties; and that works of satisfaction are

* Col. i. 24.

only of avail when wrought in and through CHRIST, and then—there will need to be no hesitation in using the term. If it may be said it is dangerous to use a term which may be misunderstood, it may be replied that it is still more hazardous to abstain from the use of a term, which prominently sets forth an aspect of Christianity which it is in the interests of corrupt nature to hide or shun.

(2.) CHRIST'S Fast had also relation to the present. He fasted as our Example to teach us one of the necessary means for vanquishing the Tempter. He taught us by this act, that the foe we have first to fear is the foe within us. Our LORD, as He was made "in the likeness of sinful flesh," "condemned sin in the flesh."* He treated His flesh as though it had within it the taint of our corruption. "Fast," S. Chrysostom says, "because thou hast sinned, and fast that thou mayest not sin." When an infectious disorder is prevalent, it is commonly observed that those are the first to take it who are not in a good state of health; so with external temptations, we are more apt to be contaminated when our inward condition has a special affinity with

* Rom. viii. 3.

them. We are tempted when we are drawn aside by our own lust and enticed. "Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts."* The root of sin is within. You may take a city by siege as well as by direct attack; fasting is the weakening of the enemy by the former process—by the withdrawal of supplies. As prayer is the remedy for the pride of life, and alms-deeds for the lust of the eye, so fasting strikes at the lusts of the flesh, and subdues it to the spirit. "I keep under my body," says the great Apostle, "and bring it into subjection: lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway."† That which our LORD did in confronting the power of evil, He taught His disciples the necessity of doing; when they failed in expelling the impure spirit, He explained to them that success in such cases depended on the combined use of prayer and fasting. This explanation was for future guidance; for the children of the bride-chamber were not to fast while the Bridegroom was with them. CHRIST took occasion from a single instance to enunciate a general law.

Fasting, in the Old Testament, was not so much employed as a means of overcoming evil

* S. Matt. xv. 19. † 1 Cor. ix. 27.

as in the New; in the Mosaic Law it was used as a penitential act rather than as a preventive measure. CHRIST'S Fast invested it with new properties, and with a brighter purpose. It was henceforth to be exercised in the Divine Favour, and not merely as the instrument of averting Divine Wrath. It was to be an accompaniment of the reign of the SPIRIT in the soul. It was to come under a law of the spiritual life,—the avoidance of occasions of sin: an avoidance not only to be practised with regard to external temptations, but also to be extended to the inward causes of sin. The New Testament fast is for the subdual of the flesh to the spirit—indications of this purpose may be found in the Psalter, as anticipations of Christian Life may be noted in the saints of old—but fasting, according to Jewish ideas, was rather associated with affliction, calamity, and punishment, than with interior triumph. In the Dispensation of the SPIRIT, a new necessity and a new power for mortification have arisen. This is intimated by the connection, in the Mystery of the Temptation, between the leading of the SPIRIT into the desert and the forty days' fast which immediately followed it. The Personal indwelling of the HOLY GHOST

demands the subdual of the flesh to the spirit, not only to prevent the outward violation of the Divine Law, but to avoid grieving an inward Presence. It was this additional reason for the subjugation of the flesh which S. Paul urged upon the Corinthians.* As after Communion every one feels a double necessity for guarding the soul, so after the gift of the Spirit a further restraint of the lower nature became a consequence of His abiding Presence. It is now not merely our spirit which is overcome when the flesh prevails, but the HOLY SPIRIT. We are not only fighting our own battle, but the Spirit, through us and by us, is warring against the powers of evil.

Again, in the New Testament, fasting is for the subdual of the flesh to the spirit out of honour to the Incarnation and Crucifixion.† GOD had not assumed a human form in the Old Testament, neither had the law of mortification been taught by the Cross. Fasting, then, has been transformed by our LORD'S Life and Sufferings, and has become an instrument of sanctification, a remedy against temptation, a preventive against relapse, a means of preserving and

* 1 Cor. vi. 19. † Gal. ii. 20.

extending the reign of the Spirit within the soul. S. Paul joins purity to fasting, as having an intimate connection. When he is commemorating the different ways of approving ourselves as the ministers of GOD, "in fastings"* is placed immediately before "by pureness," as though the one were suggested by the mention of the other, and resulted from it. Thus CHRIST'S Fast, viewed in reference to the present, suggests to us the importance of this practice as a weapon with which to meet the Foe, and obtains for us the grace which is necessary in order to employ it aright in our spiritual warfare.

(3.) CHRIST'S Fast sanctified fasting also in relation to the future, as a means for increasing illumination. Coming, as it did, immediately before the exercise of His Public Ministry, He sanctioned it as a practice which was calculated to produce an accession of light in the soul. In Holy Scripture we read that Moses and Elias fasted; the former before receiving the Law, the latter before communing with GOD on the Mount. It was after Daniel "ate no pleasant bread"† till three whole weeks were fulfilled "that he was vouchsafed a great vision." So of Cornelius‡

* 2 Cor. vi. 5, 6. † Daniel x. 3. ‡ Acts x. 30.

we read that he fasted four days, and then he beheld a man standing before him in bright clothing. Doubtless this is one reason why fasting is enjoined before receiving Sacraments, to fit the mind for spiritual illumination. Fasting in these instances fitted man for approaching GOD, and for receiving some fresh knowledge of His Mind and Will.

But here it must be remembered, that as CHRIST joined fasting and prayer together, so fasting alone does not suffice to produce illumination. Fasting disengages the soul from the trammels of corruption, lightens, so to speak, the corruptible body which presses it down, and thus removes the impediments to illumination; but prayer obtains the light. Fasting and prayer act and react on one another in the soul's upward flight; the one acquiring grace, the other using it. The soul rises with both these wings into the light, as the clouds of sensuality are dispersed.

Fasting, too, is a means of illumination, because it involves moral effort, the putting forth of the strength of the will—sacrifice. Sacrifice, as it mortifies the lower, so does it quicken the higher nature of man. Man belongs to two worlds, the material and the spiritual, and can

develop either side of his complex being: by leading the life of the flesh he can in a great degree extinguish the spiritual elements of his being, and by living the life of the spirit he can overpower the carnal cravings. It is not merely the lessening of the physical forces of the body by reduction of food, but the triumph of the moral effort which constitutes the complete "crucifixion of the flesh."

It will be seen that light springs from mortification, if we observe how darkness is the result of self-indulgence. Experience in sin is unlike any other experience, it lessens our knowledge of its nature, and hinders us from discovering its presence in the soul. Sensuality especially, weakens or destroys the perception of sin, and obscures the view of GOD. On the other hand, self-denial clears away the mist and unveils GOD to the soul, and gradually restores to it a right judgment. This is but to express in other words what the Apostle has declared to us, that spiritual things cannot be discerned by the carnal mind. Our LORD'S Fast then stands an abiding witness to the need of spirituality a witness so much the greater, as He who gives it had no need of such a discipline on His own

account. As He sanctified fasting as a work of satisfaction for the past, and a part of our spiritual armour in present conflict, so did He, by prefacing with such an ordeal that period of His Life when He would unveil His Mind to others, teach us that fasting, as it was a means of gaining, so did it qualify us for imparting Divine Light.

III. It remains for us to look at the manner or conditions of CHRIST'S Fast, in order that we may be on our guard against certain faults which are apt to mar or destroy the beneficial effects of this exercise. Our LORD assumed that Christians would fast. On the Mount He said, 'When ye fast.' He thus takes for granted that this custom would be continued. It has been said that He gave no express injunction about fasting. It may be replied that such injunction was unnecessary, unless in the case of instituting an unknown observance, or of re-asserting one which had been obscured, ignored, or forgotten. The practice of fasting had increased and not lessened by lapse of time, and was regularly observed by those to whom He was addressing Himself; so regularly, indeed, that amongst some, the departure of

His disciples from the habit produced astonishment, until JESUS explained that they were only temporarily dispensed from it because of His Presence—a Presence which by its effluence and constant action upon them, it may be, so subdued their lower impulses, and chastened and elevated their minds, as to render less necessary outward mortification. What our LORD did by His Teaching on the Mount was to separate the precious from the vile, the semblance from the reality, the shadow from the substance; and, it should be remembered that a practice which in some form appears in the successive Dispensations of GOD, must be one of fundamental importance.

(1.) A fast according to CHRIST, then, must be a real self-denial; it must be like His Fast. In the wilderness CHRIST ate nothing for forty days. To imagine that He fed on berries and fruits of the desert, is to deal unfairly with the sacred text, in order, it may be, to avoid a resort to the supernatural. CHRIST was kept alive by His Divinity. Moses and Elias were kept alive by Divine power; but CHRIST, though upheld by the same, differed from them, in that in Him the power

emanated from Himself. Though He did not hunger until the fortieth day of the fast, yet we may not conclude from this that He did not suffer. Those who have fasted long, know that weakness, exhaustion, and weariness, without hunger, are amongst the sharpest trials which they undergo. If the prophecies of the Psalter are fulfilled in CHRIST in this as in other events, such language as, "My knees are weak through fasting; my flesh is dried up for want of fatness,"* must point to a condition of painful prostration. CHRIST, then, felt keenly the deprivations of the wilderness. Fasting, then, in us must be a real self-denial. It was the absence of the essence of the act, namely, the crossing of the corrupt will, which led GOD to denounce the fast of Israel: "Behold, in the day of your fast ye find *pleasure*,"† or, as the word really means, "your own will."

The first degree of mortification is the ceasing to gratify fallen inclinations; and this involves a great struggle in those who have been addicted to any vice. The higher refinements of mortification are much easier than the first efforts of avoiding actual sensuality, as those

* Ps. cix. 24. † Isa. lviii. 3. חֵפֶץ "voluntas vestra." V.

who have gone through the conflict can testify. After vicious excesses are removed, the next degree of mortification is the surrender of superfluities. This is easier in the rich than in the poor: GOD has put superfluities out of the reach of the latter. Nature has but few needs; it is the factitious needs of a self-indulgent age which create points for mortification. Each rank of life is propped upon a greater number of needs than the one beneath it; needs, not by nature, but by circumstances called into existence, and at last assuming the character of necessaries. It is a humbling consideration for the rich, how much more dependent upon outward things they are than the poor. What is fasting to the one, is affluence to the other. There is, however, a relieving side to the picture, namely, the manifold forms of mortification which a life surrounded by luxuries has ready at hand; and this mode of using them can alone render such a life innocent. Such a life and position are so far removed from the actual circumstances of the Life of CHRIST as to demand a double care for detachment, so that, by acquiring CHRIST'S spirit a close inward resemblance may com-

pensate for the outward contrast. A further line of mortification is approached, when for a time the conveniences, as they may be termed, of life are withdrawn. These are things which are neither excesses nor superfluities, but which it is a trial to give up, such as social intercourse, amusing literature, warmth of dwelling, and the like. And, finally, mortification touches even the necessaries of life, which in fasting are for a brief space set aside, and voluntary hunger endured, whereby the soul may realise what the poor have often to suffer; and may in a faint way realise, too, what CHRIST suffered when He hungered; and may give itself to prayer, and to the consideration of Heavenly things.

(2.) Moreover, CHRIST'S Fast was in secret, in the depths of the desert; and in this He teaches us another lesson, namely, that fasting should not be done in a vain-glorious spirit. It is rare to find people severe with themselves, but rarer to find them humble and severe; yet there is no true severity without humility; for there is nothing but self-indulgence in a mortification which is supported by vain-glory. Our LORD solemnly warned us against vanity in fasting: "When ye fast, be not as the hypo-

crites; for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast."* Nature has its revenges, and unless we are on our guard, while we mortify one side of the being, we may be gratifying another. There are counterfeit victories, which are only the triumph of one passion over another. Fasting is not a little ceremony, a little rest from public entertainments and from an oppressive amount of visiting, an almost pleasant interval of cessation from a luxurious table, which has the gratification of being remarked upon by others. Neither does fasting consist in the greatness of the things which are given up, when such an abstinence leads to the injury of health and to incapacity for the performance of higher duties of charity to our neighbour; but real self-denial is the doing what we do not like, and the abstaining from doing what we do like, for the glory of GOD. Vanity in fasting will show itself both where fasting is recognised and valued, and where it is exceptional or offensive; in the former, there may be the dislike to be surpassed by others, and the desire to be conspicuous through little acts of

* S. Matt. vi. 16.

mortification; in the latter, there may be the air of a pretentious superiority or precocious display, which finds its utterance in the words, "I am not as other men are,"* "Come not near me, I am holier than thou."† JESUS suggests a choice between the passing esteem of the creature, and the lasting reward of the FATHER, and of the creature, too, in the Day when the counsels of all hearts shall be revealed. Fasting, to be like that of JESUS CHRIST, must be united with hiddenness of life, and is not to be displayed, except, as JESUS afterwards revealed His Fast, if necessary for the edification of others. It should be a sufficient delight that the FATHER seeth in secret, and rewardeth openly.

(3.) With the enlargement of the motives of fasting, there was also an importation of brightness into the practice. Our LORD was led by the Spirit to His Fast, and where the Spirit is, there is liberty, joy, and peace. There are no sorrowful cadences, but a sustained tone of triumph in the Evangelical narrative. Our LORD condemned a gloomy appearance during fasting: "When ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces

* S. Luke xviii. 11. † Isa. lxv. 5.

. . . but thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face."* To anoint the head was a custom amongst the Jews, especially at festival times, so that by this reference CHRIST intended to convey to them the thought that fasting was to be accompanied with cheerfulness.

There is the danger of losing love or sweetness of temper, unless the fast be sustained by the power of the Spirit. The fast of the body should be the feast of the soul. Temptations which fasting sometimes produces are only opportunities for conflict, and so for growth, when the fast is undertaken with prudence and under guidance, and in a spirit of obedience. Let it be remembered that all suffering without charity is nothing worth, and that "the kingdom of GOD is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the HOLY GHOST.† The head must be anointed with the oil of gladness, the unction of the Spirit; for GOD, in this as in other things, "loveth a cheerful giver."‡ If fasting be joined to moroseness, there must be something irregular in the

* S. Matt. vi. 16, 17. † Rom. xiv. 17.
‡ 2 Cor. ix. 7.

affections, which hinders us from entering heartily into the conflict with the flesh, the world, and the Devil. It is now, as of old, reluctance * is a hindrance to warfare. As soldiers with joy and courage go forth to battle, although they have to bear privations, and it may be incur suffering and death during the campaign; so in putting on the spiritual armour, and going forth to meet the enemies of the soul, there must be the same brightness and confidence. And this brightness must be caught from the Captain of our salvation, and sustained by the constant presence of His Spirit: it is not merely the result of natural good spirits, but of an unearthly radiance,—the shining out of a supernatural life.

We have thus paused to contemplate our LORD during his Fast of forty days, and considered its limits, purposes, and chief features; regarding Him at one time as the Victim, expressing His sorrow, though a sorrow bright with the joy of the HOLY GHOST; at another time, we have viewed Him as our Example, teaching us how we should personally prepare

* Deut. xx. 5.

to confront the Foe; lastly, we have noted the reality, the hiddenness, and the joyousness of His Fast in the desert. Whatever our purpose may be—whether in obedience to the Church, or as a private discipline, we fast; whether for sin past, to meet present temptation, or for increased light (and either one of these may be the end selected, or the predominant aim of the soul), our fast should have as far as possible the features of CHRIST'S Fast,—be a genuine self-denial, undertaken in a spirit of lowliness and meekness, in fellowship with Him, and in dependence on His grace.

Thus, if we avoid unreality, self-complacency, and moroseness, we shall by this practice gain some fresh victory over the Tempter, gain some fresh glimpse of Heaven, some deeper insight into the Mysteries of the Faith, some new feature of likeness to our LORD; and, by the application of His meritorious Fast in the desert, some new fitness for that Country where mortification will find no place; for there "they shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living

fountains of waters."* Those who have shared with the Lamb of GOD privation and trial, shall thereby be qualified for sharing a common joy with Him hereafter.

* Rev. vii. 16, 17.

LECTURE III.

The Personality of Satan.

"*The tempter came to Him.*"—MATT. iv. 3.

THE human soul has within it, as a part of itself, the power of self-guidance; but this power is not so centred in self and self-sufficient as to be indifferent to external influences, and to those impulses which other forms of life may bring to bear upon it. On the contrary, it is keenly alive to the attractions of other beings, and liable to be led either by their example or solicitation. Beings kindred with itself may directly entice it, and may indirectly act upon it through material inducements. The soul finds itself, in the midst of the universe of GOD, beset by many influences, by influences which are opposed to one another; and the soul is not deaf to these voices. It seems a feature of its constitution that it is not made to travel alone; though com-

plete in itself, it yet leans on one or other of these guides, and so must make its choice. As when a ship nears land, various pilots are sometimes seen to approach and bid for her guidance; then one, and then another, comes up to the vessel till the terms are settled, after which the successful applicant may be watched as the ship is towed out of the channel into the river. So the soul must agree to accept some guiding influence amongst the different ones which beset her, and to be controlled and conducted afterwards by it. But there is this difference: the ship settles the question once and for all, but the soul may yield now to one, then to another of these influences, and thus the candidates do not depart in the latter case, but make continuously renewed solicitations, seeking to gain the conduct of, or molesting, the soul on its course. These influences, when they lead in an evil direction, are called temptations, and the person who originates them, "the Tempter."

There are six influences which the soul can feel; and each of these reached the Soul of CHRIST in the Temptation. The first is the influence of the Blessed SPIRIT. The manner and

extent of that influence under which CHRIST was led up into the wilderness has been already considered. When these influences are constant, and regularly obeyed, they become *laws* of life. Hence S. Paul says of those who yield themselves habitually to the movements of the HOLY SPIRIT that "the law of the Spirit of life in CHRIST JESUS hath made them free from the law of sin and death."* So also the Apostle speaks of "a law in his members, warring against the law of his mind." The act of obeying the successive promptings of different influences S. Paul calls 'walking after the flesh,' 'walking after the Spirit.' The Soul of CHRIST, then, was under the influence of the Divine SPIRIT as a *law* of His life, and as He went into the wilderness under His guidance, so He also mortified the flesh through His long Fast, and in the strength of that Spirit met the Temptation. He met temptation, that is, as we meet it, and not by the exercise of His Divine Power. He met it as man.

CHRIST felt the presence of the Evil Spirit —'the Tempter came to Him.' He was conscious of an opposite attraction and appeal, a

* Rom. viii. 2.

counter influence, obliging Him to make a choice. That the Tempter is said to come to CHRIST implies that he was before in some sense at a distance from Him, or that his presence was less felt. The Evangelist styles him "the Tempter," as descriptive of his office and of the actions which he was about to record.

The three temptations are representative of three influences; that of the flesh, of the human spirit, and of the world. When it is said that the Tempter originates all evil influences, it is not meant that all temptations *directly* emanate from him. Objects which can gratify the desires of the flesh and of the mind may act as temptations, and the Evil One have no immediate share in the matter. But in corrupt nature, in one way he always is the source of temptation, in that through him first of all that nature was rendered prone to evil. Green wood will not burn; dry wood soon takes fire; he then who, although he does not act the part of an incendiary, dries the wood in order that it may the sooner ignite, has a real share in the cause of the conflagration. Our LORD made use of this metaphorical distinction between uncorrupt and corrupt nature:

"If they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?"* In this way, then, Satan has a hand in every temptation, though the objects which are the instruments or material of the temptation may allure without any direct intervention on his part. In uncorrupt nature he is the source of temptation in a different manner; namely, by adding to the outward objects certain enticements or proposals, which, while they appeal to natural desires, suggest a course of action contrary to the revealed Will of GOD. The outward objects are "the satellites of the malignant prince of darkness," and though sometimes impersonal and inanimate, are yet distinct influences which make themselves felt as they are presented to the soul. The proposal to turn stones into bread is the influence of the flesh; to manifest greatness by the miracle on the pinnacle of the Temple, the influence of the human spirit; to gain all kingdoms, the influence of the world.

Lastly, the sixth influence completes the experiences of CHRIST in the Mystery of the Temptation: "The angels came and ministered

* S. Luke xxiii. 31.

unto Him."* CHRIST was conscious of contact with Heaven, as He had been of contact with Hell.

Now these six influences which we have noticed are resolvable into two in the final resort, which set in motion the rest, either directly or indirectly—the HOLY SPIRIT and the Evil Spirit. It will be our next step, then, having viewed the circumstances of the Temptation and the Fast, to contemplate him who approaches CHRIST. Let us consider, first, the Personality of the Tempter; secondly, his qualifications for tempting.

I. Hitherto we have treated of influences; but now the question of the personality of the Evil One must not be slurred over; for if we do not believe in his existence, to be consistent we ought to regard the Temptation as a fable. Personality differs from influence; and by contrasting these two ideas we may gain some notion of what we mean by personality.

Influence is that which flows out from personality, whilst personality is itself a spring of influence. Personality is capable of receiving as well as giving, whilst influence only gives. Personality differs from influence as a flower is

* S. Matt. iv. 11.

distinct from its perfume, or a poison from its effects. Personality may be viewed apart from the influence; but influence itself cannot be viewed alone. Influence can only exist where it has objects which are receptive of it; but personality has an existence apart from circumstances. Influence is evanescent, exercised in various degrees, powerful according to susceptibilities. Personality is a centre of consciousness, with the power of regarding and controlling itself when its faculties are developed, of remembering past impressions, of self-guidance and choice, of developing latent capacities, the treasure-house of a history peculiar to itself, and a distinct mind. By personality we mean the highest form of life with which we are acquainted, and hence we use the term of GOD. Not that we speak of the personality of GOD and of a creature as though it were to be employed in a parallel sense; but we attribute to GOD our highest conception of life, believing that the Divine Personality transcends all our thoughts, and that creaturely personality bears to it but a distant relation, as instinct in animals is a true but distant shadow of reason in man.

Such a contrast between and description of influence and personality, is avowedly admitted to be inadequate to represent an idea which by its nature, like a primary colour, may perhaps be more easily known or understood than defined or explained. A further difficulty meets us when the personality under consideration is that of an immaterial being; and this is the same, whether we regard GOD Himself, the angels, or the disembodied spirits of men. We must be careful lest we confine this difficulty to the realisation of the existence of the Evil Spirit. We are ourselves conscious of intellectual powers which are at work without the activity of the senses; but we can form no picture of a being with a mind, a will, a memory, a consciousness without some material organism which shall incase those powers, and be ready for their use. Hence the aerial bodies with which the poet clothes the angels, and the anthropomorphic conceptions of the Nature of GOD. It is, however, not an easier task to conceive of dead matter giving birth to mind, volition, and sensation, than to imagine that such faculties can be directly created, and exist apart from it. Reason is insufficient in both

cases to solve the mystery. And yet with our utter incapacity for realising what a spirit is, it has been a question whether reason alone does not point towards the existence of an order of beings completely immaterial. The different tiers of being may lead us to suspect that man is not at the summit of creation, and that, as beings beneath him share with him the animal nature without the spiritual, so beings above him share the spiritual without the animal. The elements, the trees, the animals, men, angels, seem to form steps in a ladder, a rung of which would be wanting if spiritual essences were left out. If GOD is Himself a Spirit, and created a complete world, we should look for an order of beings who resembled Himself in His immateriality—an order of beings with finer faculties than we possess, and bodiless.

Further, as we see good and bad persons amongst ourselves, so amongst spirits we may be prepared to find moral differences, and to find their powers for good or evil greater than our own; and also to discover that they exercise these powers in trying to influence the nature which is next beneath them.

As in proving the existence of GOD to the unbeliever in Revelation, arguments are fetched from the manifestation of design in the frame of the world, from conscience, and from universal consent; so, in a similar manner, the existence of a spirit-world may be indicated. It would be difficult to reconcile the condition of the world at any time, weighed down as it is with misery and suffering, with the Divine Goodness; if some other agent than GOD were not at work in it, and the active cause of it; and if some brighter Realm did not exist. The opinion that there was an Evil God as well as a Good God, which satisfied the minds of multitudes in the East, whilst it was the exaggeration of a truth, showed the necessity of tracing evil up to some source distinct from GOD.

Again, all nations in the past have borne witness to a belief in spiritual beings; and this conviction cannot be only the product of a savage and barbarous condition, which will disappear as soon as civilization advances. In opposition to such an explanation, it has been urged that the early instincts of nations in religious matters are more likely to be the true exponents of human opinion than the later,

when civilization has brought about a onesided development of nature—developed the intellect without developing the moral sense. With regard to *evil* spirits, the disparagement of early convictions has no power; for "it is extremely doubtful whether the existence of evil demons was known either to the Greeks or Romans till about the time of the advent of CHRIST." It is in the later Jewish history, too, and not in the earlier, that the Evil One is prominent. The existence, then, of spirits, good or bad, may be drawn from the ground of universal consent.

And in human nature, if the conscience bears witness to the Unseen Judge of all, are there not strange impulses, horrid thoughts—not memories, thoughts which are sudden, disconnected, reducible to no mental law—coming at times without anything to suggest them from without, but with everything in contrast to them—thoughts which witness to contact with him who "came and sowed tares among the wheat"? Those who know best the experiences of the soul, not as a speculative study, but from practical acquaintance with the inner workings of human nature in all departments

of life, discover phenomena which can be accounted for in no other way. Evil thoughts, which no stretch of the imagination can set down to the corrupt passions, but which are hated by those who are molested by them—thoughts of blasphemy, unbelief, hatred, or self-destruction, where no mental or moral tendency in those directions can be found, and all the efforts to trace them in every instance to disease or human depravity have been baffled. The prevalence of evil proclaims the presence of a disturbing force in GOD'S creation; and as the only ultimate cause with which we are acquainted is a personal will, so we are led to attribute to a personal will the misery which is around us. The condition, then, of human life, the evidence of human opinion, and of spiritual experience, all point to the probability that there exist evil spirits—spirits who do what evil men do, mar and destroy the work of GOD, only with greater powers to do harm, and powers more lastingly exercised than is possible in the case of human beings.

But that which is but faintly visible by the lights of natural religion is made clear by the Revelation of GOD. What we suspect only and

conjecture becomes a certainty to Divine faith. The revelation of the spirit of Evil is gradual, like the revelation of the Spirit of Good. Thus, while the title 'Satan' occurs five times in the Old Testament (if the one in the book of Chronicles without the article may be counted), it occurs in five-and-twenty distinct places in the New, and other titles for the Evil One occur at least five-and-thirty times. These numbers will show that the doctrine which was found in germ in the Jewish Scriptures was developed by CHRIST and His Apostles. Whatever may be the interpretation of the third chapter of Genesis—however allegorical—'the serpent' in the case of our first parents, and the 'tempter' in that of the second Adam, play the same part, make use of temptations, the analogy between which it is impossible to deny. Again, in the marvellous drama at the opening of the book of Job, Satan is mentioned as a person whose existence was an acknowledged truth. Again, we read of the evil spirit who molested Saul; of a lying spirit, in the days of Ahab. Later notices of the Evil One have been accounted for by the contact of GOD'S people with Persian ideas; but in the first place it is very doubtful how far the Jews

during their exile could have been exposed to ideas which were probably no part of the religion of the Chaldeans; and, secondly, if they did learn Dualistic notions, the mention of Satan in the sacred books after the captivity has such pointed reference to his subordination to the Supreme Being as to separate him off by an infinite interval from the doctrine of an eternal and coequal Principle of Evil. The prevalence of a belief in Satan in later rather than earlier times, entirely confutes the notion that such an idea is the mark only of a rude and uncultivated age. The fact is, revelation gives an increased light in process of time both on the evil and on the good. The original idea is once for all imparted, and remains for a while like the seed which is hidden in the soil, but afterwards germinates. 'The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head,' as it waits for ages its fulfilment on the Divine side; so, on the Satanic side, the revelation of the Tempter also had a corresponding delay. But as the time draws near, the prophecies of the Coming One are thicker and grow richer; so, the person and work of Satan are less dimly portrayed. The triple Personalty of GOD, the distinct but insepar-

able Personality of FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST, waited for the Incarnation to be revealed thereby; so the antagonist was not fully known until "the seed of the woman" was ready for the conflict; until Human Nature by its elevation in CHRIST had freshly stirred the fury and jealousy of Hell; until the powers of the Spirit were present to enable man to cope with a Foe, whom he in his own strength would be unable to meet—then "the Tempter came to Him."

A belief in the Evil One must accompany a belief in JESUS CHRIST, for His words and work alike proclaim the existence of the Evil One. Our LORD thus refers to Satan: "Satan cometh immediately, and taketh away the word that was sown in their hearts;"* "If Satan cast out Satan, how shall his kingdom stand?"† "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven;" "Simon, behold Satan hath desired to have you."‡ Again, "Ye are of your father the devil. . . . . He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth;"§ "Now shall the prince of this world be cast out;"‖ "The prince of this world is judged;"

* S. Mark iv. 15. † S. Matt. xii. 26. ‡ S. Luke xxii. 31.
§ S. John viii. 44. ‖ S. John xii. 31.

"The prince of this world cometh." These and other utterances of our LORD render it impossible to dissociate the belief in Satan from His Teaching, Who came into the world to bear witness to the truth. If a false belief had been imported into the religion of the Jews at the time of the captivity, would not our LORD not only have abstained from making these references to Satan, but have cleared the minds of the people from what would have been a gross and fundamental error? Is it conceivable that our LORD knowing that this use of the terms "Satan," "Devil," "Prince of this world," would foster an error, yet employed them, meaning thereby on every occasion simply to rhetorically personify our evil passions? Such an explanation, besides in many cases rendering the passages meaningless, is inconsistent with our LORD'S Character; for it would be a fault in any teacher who knew the consequences, to use a term which would be habitually misunderstood.

But not only the Words of CHRIST, but His Work demand a belief in the Tempter. Redemption is the key-note of the work of CHRIST in a fallen world; and Redemption of a race implies that the race has fallen under some

alien powers—is in the hands of some tyrant from whom it is to be rescued. Such certainly is the scriptural view of the work of CHRIST. He represents Himself as the true Deliverer from the thraldom of Satan: "If I with the finger of GOD cast out devils, no doubt the kingdom of GOD is come upon you. When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace: but when a stronger than he shall come upon him, he taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusted."* It may be said that this is a metaphor, but a metaphor is the clothing of some truth; and when all that is only figurative has been removed, our LORD'S words can mean nothing else but that He has come into the world to destroy the works of the devil. The external deliverances of old were the types, and supplied the letter, whereby a spiritual Redemption was foretold and celebrated. It was of this which the psalmist delighted to sing: "Let them give thanks whom the LORD hath redeemed and delivered from the hand of the enemy."

And the writers of the New Testament with one mouth testify to the Personality of Satan. S. Peter says, "Why hath Satan filled thine heart

* S. Luke xi. 20–22.

to lie to the HOLY GHOST?"* when addressing Ananias. At Cæsarea he describes CHRIST as going about to heal "all that were oppressed with the Devil." He bids us, "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour."† S. Paul warns us not by anger to "give place to the devil;" exhorts us to "stand against the wiles of the devil," not to "fall into the condemnation of the devil," not to "fall into reproach and the snare of the devil."‡ S. John says: "He that committeth sin is of the devil; . . . the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the SON of GOD was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil."§ S. James says, "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."‖ S. Jude refers to the devil as having some mysterious dispute about the body of Moses.¶ And in the Book of Revelation the devil is styled "the old serpent;" the closing book of Scripture thus becoming, as it were, a reflection of the first book, leaving no doubt as to the one who acted through the serpent in

* Acts v. 3. † 1 S. Peter v. 8.
‡ Eph. iv. 27; vi. 11; 1 Tim. iii. 6, 7. § 1 S. John iii. 8.
‖ S. James iv. 7. ¶ S. Jude 9.

Eden. From the fact, as one ground of proof, that personal actions are attributed to the HOLY GHOST in Scripture, the Church has concluded that the HOLY GHOST is a Person; and in a similar way, from personal actions being ascribed to the Evil Spirit, his personality is admitted. The argument in the latter case is in one respect even clearer than in the former; for in the former the Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son, and so it is possible to regard the Spirit as an influence or power emanating from GOD; but in the latter the Evil Spirit possesses a singleness and separateness of existence, and is incapable of being regarded as the influence of any other, in that he does not proceed from another, but was originally created.

One result of the Mystery of the Temptation is the clearer revelation of the Personal Tempter. This was not simply that man might know his danger, but also that false notions about the origin and propagation of evil might be dispelled. To manifest the Tempter striving to draw away the Sinless One from the law of Righteousness was to manifest the cause of sin, and so to throw light upon what had been, and still is without this interpretation, an insoluble mystery.

The existence of evil had exercised the minds of philosophers, and the different views which had been propounded had filtered into the popular beliefs of the people. Some thought evil eternal, and believed in an evil God; some thought evil was resident in matter; some imagined that it was traceable to the good GOD—"Shall there be evil in the city, and the LORD hath not done it?"—not distinguishing between physical and moral evil. The doctrine, then, that evil commenced by the defection of a created will, and from that centre extended, through the energetic action of that will, to other forms of life, casts light upon a question of great perplexity; thereby vindicating the Divine Goodness, and the innocency of created things; and proclaiming also the perilous nature of the attribute of free-will. And further, it may help us a little towards understanding that mysterious Providence which permits evil. It may be that the gift of free-will necessitated such a possibility as sinning, in order that it may have scope for its exercise, and that GOD might have only voluntary worshippers and adherents, and not be the Object of an enforced allegiance. Evil has its purposes: by the power of contrast it reveals the good,

and is an occasion for its exercise, both in the case of one's own evil and the evil of others with which we come in contact; but its final purpose, which the Mystery of the Temptation discloses, is, that it may be *overcome* by good. GOD permitted it that greater good might come out of it, and that the Seed of the woman, and all in union with Him, may triumph over the powers of darkness, that where sin abounded grace and glory also might at last much more abound. The personality of Satan, and his fall like lightning from heaven, teach us that sin had a beginning, that it sprang from him, that it was at first, and is still, an abuse of free-will.

II. Hitherto we have been occupied with the consideration of the personality of the Tempter; now we proceed to deal with his qualifications for the office which that title implies. All that we know of him leads us to conclude that he is a formidable enemy. There are three qualities in an enemy which inspire terror, and where these three are found in combination, then the foe is most of all to be dreaded. These are, skill, power, and malice.

The Evil One has an angelic nature, and consequently has mental faculties which exceed

those which we possess. Those who have compared the nature of the human soul with the nature of the angel, have noticed that there remain four features of difference between them, after having traced the points in which they resemble one another. The angel is completely immaterial; the human soul has a certain need of and affinity with the body as its complement. The angel's will is inconvertible, and fixed in its choice for good or evil; the human will changes, fluctuates, hates now what once it loved, and loves what once it hated. The angel's nature cannot be touched either with the feeling of our infirmities or with our sensations; the human soul is pierced by the impulses and thrills of the flesh; and, finally, which is the point at issue, the angel's nature is *intellectual*, the human soul only *rational*,—and these two terms are used to express a great difference. The human mind assures itself of truths through an argumentative process, clothes its thoughts in material forms, and gains knowledge in an indirect and imperfect way; the angelic mind comprehends truth without reasoning or deduction, and possesses a faculty of knowing which is more vigorous and direct than ours was, even

in an unfallen state; and of the vigour of our intellect when unclouded by sin, perhaps we can now possess no just idea. If man is lower than the angels in his innocency, how much is he beneath them in his corruption!

Moreover, in the angelic nature itself Holy Scripture assigns distinctions; and if Satan be represented by 'Lucifer,' the "light-bearer," such a title would imply a higher knowledge and influence than ordinary angels possessed. Subtlety was the attribute which characterised the serpent at first; and one of the titles of Satan, "Dæmon," signifies, according to some, by its derivation, skill and wisdom. S. Augustine, in his treatise on "the City of GOD," mentions two modes of obtaining knowledge amongst the angels: the one, which is called their 'morning knowledge,' because of its clearness, the knowledge which they gained from seeing the nature of things in the mind of GOD; the other, which, because it is more dim, is called 'the evening knowledge,' that which they gain by contemplation of the creatures themselves. They are like those who become acquainted with some building, not only by going over it, but also by having first mastered the plan of it. But besides the

original capacity for knowledge which Satan possessed, and which is not lost by his fall, for it is not an endowment of grace but a constituent part of his nature as a spirit, he has acquired another knowledge as 'the Tempter,' namely, that of experience. His skill arises from the use he has made of his natural power in bending it to the one design of tempting, thus learning, if it may be so called, the science of temptation from past successes and failures. As an evidence of this skill it would be sufficient to bring forward the temptations of the second Adam, and the exquisite subtlety with which he successively framed them.

'Knowledge,' it is said, 'is power,' and if so it will be a most dangerous weapon when it is employed by an evil will. The power of Satan is threefold. First, there is will-power. As angels surpass men in mind, so in strength of will for good or evil. Thus we are conscious that angelic worship exceeds ours in vigour, and therefore we call on the angels when we feel the inadequacy of our own efforts to praise GOD: "Praise the LORD, ye angels of His, ye that excel in strength."* Will-power is greater

* Ps. ciii. 20.

than any other. We are aware of this in intercourse with others, and speak of those who have a weak or strong will. All know how even mental activity depends much on the energy of the will. Satan, then, in temptation brings the might of his will, as far as permitted, to bear upon the will he would seduce. Some have thought that in our LORD'S case alone this power of his was allowed its unrestrained exercise.

The next element of power is to be found in the fact that he does not stand alone in this work of temptation. The angels who sank with him seem to preserve what had been their hierarchical order. Scripture clearly reveals a kingdom of evil, and not merely an Evil Being; a kingdom of darkness as well as a kingdom of light: "We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."* The unclean spirit who cried, "My name is legion: for we are many,"† was giving utterance to the same truth. It has been even thought that in the order of the evil

* Eph. vi. 12. † S. Mark v. 9.

spirits there is a mimicry of the pure and blessed spirits which stand before the Throne of GOD, from the occurrence in Holy Scripture of the number seven in reference to the devils.

At any rate, the New Testament states plainly that there is a host of evil angels as well as of good; and some have ventured, from the mystical description of the Dragon in the Book of the Revelation, to conclude that 'the third part of the stars of heaven' fell. A multitude of beings, then, marshalled by one leading will, is another ground of strength.

And a third source of power lies in that most mysterious relation between fallen man and the Tempter, which necessitated Redemption, and which justified our LORD'S description of Satan —"The Prince of this world,"* and "the strong man armed."† In some way Satan gained power through the fall, on the principle that "to whom ye yield yourself servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey;"‡ and this state of captivity was a distinct ground of power until CHRIST "led captivity captive,"§ when in part it was broken.

* S. John xiv. 30. † S. Luke xi. 21.
‡ Rom. vi. 16. § Eph. iv. 8.

And this skill and power are combined with an unchanging and unceasing hostility against GOD and man. Although fully conscious that his destiny, through the gift of free-will, was committed to his own keeping, yet he hates GOD, and never loses an occasion of maligning Him. He assails the Divine Perfections, and strives to distort them, and, above all, labours to obscure the love of GOD. He misrepresented Him to our first parents as One who was envying and trying to deceive them. "Ye shall not surely die;" "GOD doth know that in the day ye eat thereof . . . . ye shall be as gods."* "Doth Job serve GOD for nought?"†; "Command that these stones be made bread;" "Cast thyself down;" "Fall down, and worship me;" are all utterances which impugn some Attribute of GOD. And this malice against GOD he vents on man, who is in the image of GOD. He seeks to destroy GOD in that image; to deprive GOD of the souls whom He loves with an infinite love; and to prevent the soul's attainment of that bliss and glory which he has forfeited. Thus pride and envy stimulate him in his deadly work. A Foe, then, which combines

* Gen. iii. 4, 5. † Job i. 9.

such skill, strength, and malice, is a formidable one, and qualified to fulfil the office of tempter.

But whilst we notice the extent of Satan's powers, we must not omit to notice also their limits. The title "Tempter" itself indicates certain bounds to his operations. Satan, as a creature, possesses finite capacities. Thus Satan's knowledge is restricted in two ways—he cannot discern our thoughts, nor by himself read the future. It is GOD'S prerogative to be a Discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart; yet Satan invades that prerogative as far as possible. And though he cannot obtain a certain knowledge, yet by observation, experience, suggestion, comparison, and insight, he acquires what may be termed a conjectural knowledge of what passes within the precincts of the mind. Although, when he instils some evil imagination, he must, as it were, wait outside whilst his message is being delivered within the house; yet can he predict the effect in one case, from the effect which he has observed under similar circumstances in many others. Some have gone further than this, and have attributed to him a knowledge of the thoughts,

together with an ignorance of the intents of the hearts; but to credit him only with a conjectural or probable, and not with a certain or intuitive knowledge, seems the truer and safer course. A further boundary to the knowledge of Satan is placed by time. As it is GOD alone who searcheth the heart, so it is GOD alone who can "shew the things that are to come hereafter."* The same capacities which help the Adversary to discern the secrets of the heart, may enable him astutely to predict or forecast what shall be; but, without a special revelation from GOD, the future as a certainty must ever be hidden from him.

And as there are two limits to Satan's knowledge, so are there two restrictions placed upon his power; one on the side of GOD, and one on man's side. On the Divine side there is the law of permission; Satan's actions are controlled by the Divine Dominion of Jurisdiction. In tempting he has to obtain the consent of GOD. This is evident in the history of Job: GOD gave him permission, and assigned him a certain limit beyond which he was not to go; a limit which afterwards was by a second per-

* Isa. xli. 23.

mission extended, but still with a restriction. In like manner, we find the lying spirit only acting on Ahab's prophets after receiving leave to do so. The unclean spirits entered into the herd of swine, only when JESUS had "suffered them."* Again, we are comforted by the assertion: "GOD is faithful, Who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able"†—words implying that Divine Jurisdiction by which the power of the Evil One was curbed. On our side, too, there is a power which, though weaker than the corresponding power in Satan, can yet hold its own, the power of free-will. "GOD has, in truth, given to the will such liberty and such power, that if all the senses, all evil spirits, and all the world were to conspire together, and with their combined strength to assault and oppress it, the will could still, in spite of them, will or will not whatever it liked with perfect freedom." The will cannot throw off its responsibility, which is independent of circumstances; neither can it attribute to temptation an overwhelming power. Satan is *only* the Tempter. He cannot force the citadel of the soul; its gate must be opened

* S. Luke viii. 32. † 1 Cor. x. 13.

before he can enter. He himself is conscious of his limited strength—"Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." It is by subtlety and deception, by enticement or persecution, that he hopes to gain over the will, rather than by direct attack or open violence.

Formidable then as the Adversary is, there is no ground for despondency, nor excuse for failure in the conflict. If our mind and will were the sole forces with which we had to confront his skill, strength, and malice, we might indeed fear the result. But we fight in union with GOD, with Eternal Wisdom, Almighty Power, Infinite Goodness on our side. We go forth in the power of the SPIRIT of GOD. We must cast ourselves upon GOD. If angelic faculties are keener, stronger, more subtle than our own, there are supernal powers as well as powers from beneath; and the former are more in number than the latter, and will contend for us against our ghostly enemies, as of old 'the stars in their courses' were said to 'fight against Sisera.'*

We may, then, take hope, notwithstanding this Goliath who presents himself, and defies

* Judges v. 20.

the armies of Israel. Nay, in one way, from the fact of his existence as the Personal Source of evil, a certain hope may be drawn; for in that it was through envy of the devil sin entered into the world, therefore evil is a foreign thing and not indigenous in our nature. It was imported from another race. Thus we may hope to be delivered from that to which our nature did not give birth; and when horrid thoughts oppress the soul, we may trace them to an Evil Spirit, rather than to our own condition, and regard them as the exhalations of his poisonous breath, rather than the products of our own corruption. The consciousness that we are contending not with a mere abstraction, but with a Personal Foe, arouses the prowess of the soul, creates sympathy for those who are fallen, transfers anger from the objects which excite it to its original cause, and whilst it renders us watchful, it stimulates our energy and antagonism against evil, and thereby draws us closer to CHRIST, the Captain of our salvation.

But the awful truth, that evil may be irretrievable, that the gift of free-will may lead to final ruin, is a sad subject for our contemplation,

and full of warning. That a being of original excellence and dignity should fall, and should devote those powers which were entrusted to him, to work disaster in the universe of GOD, is a primary instance of the fearful way sin may be permitted to run its course; whilst, on the other hand, that it should be inconsistent with the Divine Perfections, when the gift of free-will is once given, to recall it or interfere with its subsequent action, though productive of such misery to its possessor and to others, is a clear proof that the presence of evil would on the whole be found to increase the good, when both shall be weighed in the balances of the Providence of GOD. We must trust His Goodness, to Whom it seemed better that evil should exist, and good by His wisdom be drawn out from it, than that it should never arise. He foresaw, Who knew how that gift, which is a shadow of His own independency, would be abused by angel and man and the effects of their evil choice—that greater good would accrue from permitted evil than could have existed had evil no place in His Universe. It may be true that it is the mark of a wise workman to exclude defect from his work; but that which

holds good in the particular, may be inapplicable to the universal. The existence of defect in the particular, if it tend to the general excellence of the whole, may be consistent with that Wisdom which finds its grandest exercise in overcoming evil and making it subservient to good. Where sin abounded, grace should much more abound. From the Fall, we have Redemption; from death, Resurrection; from persecution, crowns of Martyrdom; from misbeliefs, developed dogmas of our Faith; from remembrances of sin in the penitent, a constant incentive to virtues—to lowliness, contrition, thankfulness, and fervour of a forgiven soul; and by the sins of others are given to us the opportunities for the exercise of virtues, such as patience, meekness, condescension, courage, which would, but for evil, have been unknown; from temptation comes the victory, and the Glory of CHRIST is the greater through the Wounds, which are the abiding witnesses of His Triumph over evil. And this principle of overruling evil to the furtherance of good is the special work of CHRIST—a work in which He does not stand alone, but calls all into fellowship with Him, each having some share

in the struggle, and the promise of a share also in the Reward; for He saith, "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in His throne."*

* Rev. iii. 21.

LECTURE IV.

The First Temptation.

"*And when the tempter came to Him, he said, If thou be the* SON *of* GOD, *command that these stones be made bread. But He answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of* GOD."—MATT. iv. 3, 4.

WE turn now from the Tempter to the Tempted. By the Tempter we understand a personal presence—the presence of a being who is most astute, has consummate power, and implacable malice. There are two points, however, which must not be allowed to pass without comment, as they are intimately connected with some of the difficulties which have been supposed to stand in the way of the literal interpretation. The first concerns the visibility of the Tempter; the second relates to his knowledge of CHRIST.

With regard to the first, the Evangelists seem to imply that the Tempter presented himself before the eyes of CHRIST. "The first inter-

pretation that is suggested by an unprejudiced consideration of the text itself" is that CHRIST went into the desert "to undergo a temptation of the Devil, who accordingly appeared to Him visibly and personally, and, in various ways and at various places, to which he was the conductor, prosecuted his purpose of temptation."* This is the candid avowal of the sceptic, before he begins his work of destruction; and it seems to be the only fair way of dealing with the sacred record. When a being is said to come and to speak to another who is visible, to seek from him an act of worship, and to depart, most certainly a visible presence is assumed.

The common objections to this view, namely, that whilst the blessed angels are permitted to address man under visible forms, the evil angels are not recorded to have done so; and, secondly, that Satan "by a personal and undisguised appearance" would have no "prospect of success," are insufficient. For, as to the first, Satan, we have seen, was permitted to address our first parents through the intervention of a visible form, and therefore might again be permitted to do so,

* Strauss.

especially on the analogous occasion of tempting the second Adam; and even if this were the only instance of a visible temptation, the greatness of the conflict and its issues would be a reason for the permission of an exceptional mode of warfare. The acute remark, that a visible temptation makes CHRIST'S conflict unlike our own, really mistakes the ground of likeness between the two, which is not in the *manner* of tempting, but in the substance of the temptations. The second objection is based on the supposition that the visible form of Satan was necessarily unsightly, and that we have no right to imagine that he transformed himself into an angel of light on this occasion. It may be replied that we do not know what form he assumed; but if he assumed a visible form, that it would be one which would, he imagined, be most calculated to further his designs, we can have no doubt; and the idea that the form by which he rendered himself visible was odious, is altogether contrary to the tenor of a narrative, in which at one stage of the transaction he claims worship, and in the whole of which he acts by enticement, and not by threat.

The second point which needs to be noticed is more important, and affects not the manner, but the credibility of the Temptation; namely, Satan's knowledge of CHRIST. One of the earliest objections which were made against this Mystery, was grounded on the assumption that Satan knew CHRIST to be the SON of GOD, and that therefore he could have entertained no hope of overcoming Him, and consequently that he could have had no motive for "taking the trouble to appear." Besides the obvious reply, that we knew not what efforts a malicious spirit might not make, simply to insult, molest, and afflict CHRIST with his presence; we deny altogether the assumption that Satan was convinced that CHRIST was the SON of GOD. The sentence with which the first and second temptations were introduced, "If thou be the SON of GOD" (as CHRIST had been proclaimed to be at His Baptism), whatever amount of flattery or ridicule is to be found in the motive or tone of it, is simply a conditional expression. But the words, "If you are the SON of GOD, do this or that"—the act solicited being a proof of the claim to the title in the condition—would certainly lead an unbiassed reader to

conclude that there was doubt as to CHRIST'S pretensions in the one who employed those words. The general question concerning Satan's knowledge of CHRIST'S Divinity will be dealt with in the following lecture; it will be sufficient now to indicate the view which is taken, and which will then be supported, which is this —that Satan was not *certain* about CHRIST'S Divine Sonship, and that he had in tempting the purpose of discovering it. This interpretation has high authority; the Temptation was "an explanation of Divinity;" "in the first plot the Devil sought to find out whether CHRIST could create or change substances." "If" CHRIST "can do this, He is GOD; if not, only man." "The devil, not knowing who was present before him, was endeavouring to lay snares in order to discover that which was secret and hidden from him." "In all the temptations he tried to find out whether CHRIST was the SON of GOD." These and many other quotations from ancient writers, to whom we mostly look when we would ascertain the meaning of Holy Scripture, may serve to show their opinion on this matter. We may, then, regard the 'Tempter' as approaching our LORD

in a visible form, and as standing in doubt of His real Greatness—"And when the tempter came to Him, he said, If thou be the SON of GOD, command that these stones be made bread."

In contemplating the Tempted in His mysterious struggles, we need to draw near to Him in a spirit of faith and reverence. It must be borne in mind, that it is "the Mystery" of the Temptation which we are considering, and that therefore we must not approach it as a mathematical problem which has to be solved, and upon which we must exercise our ingenuity, until we can clear it of all obscurity. But, on the contrary, we must expect that there will be depths which we cannot fathom, and aspects of truth which it is difficult to reconcile with one another. First, we will consider the limits of the Temptation; secondly, its reality.

I. It has often been said that CHRIST'S Temptation differs from ours, in that His was only external, and ours is internal also. In other words, that CHRIST possessed no susceptibility to temptation, but simply heard what Satan had to say without any inward excitement of desire through his proposals. Now, such an explanation of the Temptation

takes from temptation its essence, and thereby removes this experience of CHRIST from our experience, when undergoing the same ordeal, by an interval so great, that no link of sympathy on this ground is left between Him and us. And yet, in the remarkable language of S. Paul, CHRIST is said "to be touched with the feeling of our infirmities,"* to have been "in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin," to have acquired a new ground of sympathy with us through the temptation; "for in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted."† It is plain, then, that any interpretation of the Temptation, which does not attribute to CHRIST a *real* conflict, cannot be a right one; for a mere objective temptation cannot have purchased such results as those named by the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews.

Even amongst ourselves, when our temptations are widely different, it is difficult to establish any lasting spiritual sympathy. When one can say to another, 'I know that feeling; I have been through that struggle,' there is a common ground for fellowship, and a power

* Heb. iv. 15. † Heb. ii. 18.

to enter into and understand the difficulties of one another; but where the sensibilities or propensities are very unlike, our attempts to sympathise with each other are often wide of the mark. If it is difficult, then, to establish a bond of sympathy between those whose temptations are very different, it will be a heavier task to bridge over the chasm which lies between those who are tempted, and those who are incapable of temptation; for to say that our LORD was only objectively tempted is to say that He was not tempted at all. Objective temptation only deserves the latter name when it is viewed on the side of the tempter; to the tempted it is not in any wise temptation. We say, in speaking of our own temptations, 'that is no temptation to me,' meaning that it produces no excitement of desire; and such a declaration is perfectly true under the circumstances, and it is a common saying, that what is a temptation to one person is none to another.

If it may be said that our LORD passed through the Temptation as unmoved by the successive assaults which He encountered as a statue would have been, then for all practical

purposes we might resign this Mystery into their hands who reduce it to a natural event, a fable, allegory, myth, or dream. It is the interior struggle which makes this Mystery become a new fount of sympathy, and brings CHRIST most near to us through it. We would not, then, limit the Temptation to an external trial.

Neither would we reduce the temptation to the general idea of suffering. Feeling the unsatisfactoriness of any explanation which does not include a subjective feature in it, and yet shrinking, through undue reverence or some imperfection of belief in the Incarnation, from asserting that our LORD was inwardly tried, some have spoken of the Temptation simply as a suffering; and doubtless temptation and suffering in Holy Scripture are sometimes convertible terms. That it was a suffering, the Apostle asserts: "He suffered, being tempted." This suffering has been supposed to spring from contact with the Tempter, and the consequent shrinking of a pure nature from a loathsome presence; and it cannot be doubted but that his nearness was a positive pain to CHRIST. If a good man feels it a trial to be in the company of the profane, the truthful to be with the insincere, the pure

with the polluted, the loving with the cruel, what must have been the abhorrence of the Holy One when Satan was present and addressed Him? what the recoil of Him, in Whom all Holiness resides, from the touch of that being who is the source of all evil? But the pain of such a contact is rather a circumstance of the Temptation than the Temptation itself. When S. Paul says of CHRIST "He suffered,"* he adds the specific form of that suffering, "being tempted," and with the view of tracing as the result of that trial, a fresh ability to succour the tempted.

Now, the outward contact with a visible Tempter, and the recoil from his touch, being a peculiar feature of CHRIST'S Temptation, and one not shared by us, can hardly be said to capacitate Him for entering into our trials. Moreover, inward purity in CHRIST made Him shrink from the presence of the Tempter, and His power of reading the motives and thoughts of the heart displayed to Him the subtlety and malice of the Devil; neither of which attributes we possess, so that we have little in common with CHRIST which can associate

* Heb. ii. 18.

us with that suffering of His sinless Nature. It is the reality of His conflict which can alone enable us in our struggles to look up to the Glorified CHRIST, and claim His sympathy as of one who was tempted in all points as we are, yet without sin. It is the reality of His conflict upon which is staked the glory of His victory—a glory derived from actual struggle and conquest. We cannot then assign as the limit of the Temptation, that it was a suffering on account of contact, outward and visible, with the Tempter.

Both interpretations, namely, that the Temptation was only external, and that it was only a suffering from contact with the Tempter, are inadequate, and render the Temptation an objectless ordeal, and one utterly unlike anything we have to experience. We maintain that the Temptation was a reality on the side of the Tempted as well as on that of the Tempter; that is, that each temptation appealed to a desire in the Heart of CHRIST, which His Will restrained and refused to gratify. It remains for us to erect certain boundaries which we must not traverse, and which, when once laid down, must remain unalterably fixed as

the true limits of the Mystery; these will be three.

First, CHRIST was absolutely sinless. Every thought, word, and deed throughout His whole life was in perfect conformity to the Law of GOD. He challenged His enemies to put their finger upon a single blot on His life:—"Which of you convinceth me of sin?"* Others around Him were conscious of His Holiness. S. Peter felt the great difference between a sinless and a sinful nature when he poured forth that utterance of self-accusation, "Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O LORD."† The same Apostle, who had been the constant companion of CHRIST, says of CHRIST that He "did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth."‡ S. Paul asserts that CHRIST "knew no sin;"§ in the same breath he refers to CHRIST'S temptation and sinlessness, lest the one should be imperilled by the fact of the other. He enlarges on CHRIST'S sinlessness, and describes Him as "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners."‖ S. John says, "In Him is no sin."¶ The entire absence in

* S. John viii. 46. † S. Luke v. 8. ‡ 1 Peter ii. 22.
§ 2 Cor. v. 21. ‖ Heb. vii. 26. ¶ 1 S. John iii. 5.

CHRIST of actual sin is the outermost boundary which marks off truth from fundamental error. Even Pilate, Judas, and the dying thief bear witness to the sinlessness of CHRIST in the face of His persecutors. But the absence of actual sin is one thing, and the absence of sinfulness another.

A second barrier has here to be raised—a barrier which separates CHRIST not only from sinners, but from the sinful. CHRIST was conceived by the HOLY GHOST: though He took our nature, and with it all those infirmities which were not inconsistent with His Perfection; yet, in taking it, no taint of the fall was permitted to intermingle with the foundations of His Human Life. It was a "holy thing" which the Blessed Virgin brought forth, and which was formed of her substance. Questions as to the title or sanctity of the Blessed Virgin had not anciently so much in view her personal greatness, as her relation to the Central Mystery of the Incarnation. 'The Holy Place' is the preparation for the way into the 'Holy of Holies.' In CHRIST, then, there was no fuel of evil concupiscence, no trace of original sin, and so no affinity with evil. Our LORD'S declara-

tion amounts to this—"the prince of this world cometh, and hath *nothing* in me."* Any temptation which involved a violation of the Moral Law of GOD would find in the Heart of Jesus nothing to which it could appeal. Such a temptation would have no effect upon our LORD; He could not be tempted with that which was intrinsically evil; but that a sinless nature is in some way capable of temptation is evident already from the trial of the angels, and the fall of our first parents.

There is yet a distinction, which renders our conception of temptation in the case of our LORD more difficult than in any other—that is, His impeccability; not only His sinlessness, not only His original purity, but a certain impossibility of sinning, is affirmed of Him. But this impossibility must be so explained as not to destroy the faculty of free-will, which is a constituent element of human nature. Absolute impeccability belongs to GOD alone; impeccability in CHRIST is an attribute of His Person as a Divine Person, not of His Human Nature when viewed alone. In consequence of the union of that Nature with the Divine, and of

* S. John xiv. 30.

the fulness of grace which resided in His soul, and of the Vision which it possessed, by a communication of properties His Humanity shared in the impeccability of His Person. The iron which glows in the furnace, and is inseparable from it, cannot become cold, yet its heat is not its own; so impeccability is the result of grace, and not of nature, in that Humanity of CHRIST which is enkindled by the Divine Fire. When it is said of the Blessed in Heaven that they can sin no more, it is not meant that their free-will is lost, but that it is inconceivable that they should turn away from that Vision, which is their Joy and Satisfaction. Thus, in our LORD it is inconceivable, irreverent, and blasphemous, to imagine that He *could* sin; for to attribute such a possibility to Him is either to suppose that GOD could sin, or that the Sacred Humanity could be sundered in the moment of failure from its union with the Divine. Viewed objectively, then, sin was an impossibility to Him. But, on the other hand, we must not so interpret impossibility to sin as not to permit susceptibility of temptation to co-exist with it; the former is a theological inference, the latter a

clear statement of Holy Scripture. Upon the exercise of free-will in CHRIST depends His Merits, the reality of His Temptation, the force of His Example, the greatness of His Obedience. To regard Him as moving by necessity as He approached the Cross, is to remove Him from our admiration, and to render His own words and conduct on that occasion inexplicable.

The fear of reducing CHRIST'S movements to those of a machine, rather than of a moral nature which has power of choice in each step which is taken, has led some Divines even to shrink from the dogma of impeccability, and to invest CHRIST with the same freedom as the first Adam possessed before the fall. But may we not find some way of holding to the doctrine of CHRIST'S impeccability, and at the same time of accrediting Him with all the struggles and fears of simple humanity? Our minds are finite; and we discover their finiteness not only by the limits of truths which we cannot traverse, but also by the fact that the highest truths wear to us the appearance of contradictions. We see this aspect and that; but we cannot harmonize them, yet we can believe in both separately. The doctrine of

the Holy Trinity, Three Persons and One Personal GOD,—the doctrine of Divine Foreknowledge and human freedom,—are instances of the highest truths, which we believe separately, but which are by our faculties irreconcileable one with another. Thus, we may believe as an abstract truth that CHRIST was unable to sin, and yet on the other hand may believe that in some way He had all the struggles and difficulty which He would have had, had He not possessed that attribute—that He had for all purposes the same freedom as the first Adam.

We have dwelt on the limits of the Temptation: those we would not assign to it, namely, that it was simply external, or only a suffering from contact with the Tempter; those we would set around it, and regard them as fixtures, or danger-signals, namely, the sinlessness of CHRIST, the absence of original sin in CHRIST, the impossibility of sinning as a Personal attribute of CHRIST. Having laid down these boundaries, we shall be able to enter upon the consideration of the reality of temptation to CHRIST without risk of error; and, as we proceed, may His Spirit guide us into all truth!

II. It will be necessary, in order to maintain that temptation was a reality to CHRIST, to consider what are the constituent elements of temptation, and then to discover them in the Temptation of CHRIST. If we subject temptation to an analysis, we shall find that five ingredients enter into its composition; namely, desire, law, opposition between desire and law, suggestion, and free-will.

The first is desire, which lies at the root of the whole. If we can imagine a nature which has no capacity for desire, such a nature would have consequently no susceptibility to temptation. Those who understand human nature best, assert that desire and anger are the two most deep and essential movements of the soul. Our LORD, as perfect Man, therefore possessed both. Accordingly we read of Him as exhibiting anger: He "looked round about on them with anger."* And we find Him capable of desires, the natural desires of food and drink, which in our present subject concern us most: "And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, He was afterward an hungred."† In the morning when He re-

* S. Mark iii. 5. † S. Matt. iv. 2.

turned from Bethany to Jerusalem "He hungered; and when He saw a fig tree in the way, He came to it."* So by the well of Samaria He was athirst, and said to the woman, "Give me to drink."† Again, on the Cross, the thirst, which was one of the sufferings which usually accompanied crucifixion, He experienced. Our LORD also expressed desires of the mind as well as of the body: "With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer."‡

Desires are of two kinds or degrees: there is the desire which is simply natural, the movement of pure nature; and there is the same desire in a second stage, when some morbid quality has been imported into it, which gives it a wrong direction or undue impetuosity. The one is the craving of nature according to its original condition; the other, the corrupt desire of nature when contaminated by sin. The one desire is the sign of health, the other of disease. The former was in CHRIST as true Man; the latter was not in CHRIST, because He had no stain of original sin. And it may be well to mention that in many passages in ancient

* S. Matt. xxi. 18, 19. † S. John iv. 7. ‡ S. Luke xxii. 15.

writers, where the word which we translate 'impeccability' is used, this is all that is meant; and thus in much that has been written, the peccability of CHRIST'S Human Nature has been taken as identical with its sinfulness; but "this detestable ascription of a corrupt humanity to our LORD" is a totally distinct doctrine from that of its peccability. Angels were created with a sinless nature, but were peccable; Adam had a sinless nature, but fell. "No sinful impulse finds a place in the soul of our LORD." The genuine thirst of nature was His, though the feverish thirst of sin found no place in Him. The pure craving of nature in CHRIST, then—which as man He possessed, and to the presence of which Holy Scripture bears witness—is the first ingredient of Temptation.

The next thing which is necessary, in order that these desires should form the subjective basis of temptation, is the Law of GOD. The nature with this tendency to reach forth in different directions finds itself in the presence of a Rule of Life—a Law indicating what should be, and what should not be gratified—a Law allowing, commanding, restraining the action of these desires. But as there are two kinds of

desires, that which is natural and that which is depraved, so there are two kinds of law—one positive, the other moral. The natural desires may be restrained by the positive; but the corrupt desires must be restrained by the Moral Law. By the positive law of GOD is intended any expression of the Divine Will which forbids or enjoins that which is not intrinsically right or wrong,—is not right or wrong in the nature of things, but which simply, because of the expression of the Divine Will, becomes in a relative sense the one or the other. By the Moral Law, of course, is meant that which does not make things to be right or wrong, but graciously indicates that they are already so, and that consequently they are either enjoined or forbidden. That which is opposed to the Moral Law is intrinsically evil, opposite to the fixed Character of GOD, and to that reflection of His Moral Nature which remains in us. The Moral Law is a written Rule of Life; the positive law is a Personal Rule. For temptation there must be law as well as desire. Desire without law may be a source of enjoyment; law without desire a sign-post of duty; but the two must co-exist,

or otherwise that mysterious test and struggle, called Temptation, will be unknown.

Thirdly, there must be opposition. The craving, whatever it may be, must come into collision with the law. If both point in the same direction, there can be no temptation. When "the LORD GOD commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat,"* that command was the occasion of no temptation. Human nature was like a ship with both wind and tide in its favour. But when the addition was made, "But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it,"† then temptation became possible. In the case of a pure creature, the clash must be with a positive law; with the corrupt creature, it will be also with the Moral Law. Thus with our first parents it was a positive commandment which restrained their desires. There could be nothing wrong in itself in eating the fruit of a tree which belonged to them; it was only wrong because it was distinctly forbidden. Positive laws are tests of obedience, and are the occasions for the exercise of virtues, and none the less so when we are unable to

* Gen. ii. 16. † Gen. ii. 17.

discern the purposes of them. By such, then, pure natures are tried; and JESUS CHRIST, who willed to be "made like unto His brethren" "in all things,"* willed to be like them in this. That act, which would have been evil, even if GOD had not forbidden it, would have no attraction for a sinless nature. To eat bread, to turn stones into loaves, if you are able, when pressed by hunger, is no sin, unless GOD has for some reason forbidden you to do so.

Now, in CHRIST the desire of the body may be, nay, was, in opposition to the Divine Will; the pure desire of nature was contrary to what He knew to be the Father's Will. In this sense, His was inward, and therefore real, temptation. JESUS could feel no inward temptation to anything which was intrinsically sinful; but what we feel in relation to sinful attractions, He could feel in relation to forbidden objects. JESUS could feel no inward inclinableness to any act which was not in itself good, pure, and honest, but He could feel an inward desire for food, and yet that desire be in opposition to the demands of the Divine Will. In the Agony there is the same sort of

* Heb. ii. 17.

struggle, the craving of the will of sense to be delivered from the awful sufferings of the Passion; the collision between the pure instincts of a nature which shrank from pain and death, and "the commandment" which He had "received of the Father."* On the one side there is a struggle which CHRIST could not know because of His sinlessness, the struggle of an evil nature with the temptations which are homogeneous with it; on the other, there is a struggle which was possible to Him, and which we cannot fully know, which arose from His perfect knowledge and acceptance of all that His Mission involved according to the Divine Appointment—"Burnt-offerings and sacrifice for sin hast Thou not required. Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, that I should fulfil thy will, O my GOD: I am content to do it; yea, thy law is within my heart."†

The Moral Law of GOD we know both by inward light, and by the Written Law which coincides with, developes, and fixes our intuitions; but the Will of GOD, where the subject-

* S. John x. 18. † Ps. xl. 6, 7.

matter does not involve moral distinctions,—where conscience does not declare for or against either of two courses which may be open to us —is unknown to us, unless we have received a special Revelation concerning it; and it was in this respect, where our ignorance of GOD'S Will would bring us no conflict, that our LORD could by the knowledge of that Will be subjected to a real trial. JESUS knew at all times His Father's Will and Desire; that Will was the law of His Human Life, as the Moral Law supplies fallen nature with its restraints and guidance. JESUS knew on this occasion that it was contrary to the Divine Will to work a miracle for the relief of His hunger; and His Human Nature craved that act, which as GOD He would have otherwise performed, and hence the interior conflict.

It must be carefully borne in mind, that in nothing that has been said on this third ingredient of temptation, namely, the opposition between desire and law, is any reference made to CHRIST'S Human Will. His Human Will—the reasonable Will—was always in most perfect conformity with the Divine Will. The prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane, "Not

my will, but thine be done,"* referred to the will of the body, the sensuous will, and not to any momentary swerving of His Perfect and most Holy Human Will. It was probably through some precipitate misunderstanding concerning this distinction that Honorius was led astray. It will be sufficient, then, to have added this caution to what has been said, to prevent any mistake as to the perfect concord of the Human and Divine Wills in CHRIST.

Desire, law, the collision between the two, these are three elements of a temptation; then, the presentation of an object to the desire will bring about the struggle.

Desires which are natural to us may remain quiescent, unless they are excited by the presence or representation of the object which may be desired. All natures, except the Divine, have dormant powers, which need some incentive or stimulus to set them in motion, or at least to stir them into keener activity. The desires of the sensitive appetite require to be informed by the intellect or senses, as blind men must be told of the nearness of objects for which they would crave if they saw them. There

* S. Luke xxii. 42.

can be no real desire of that which is unknown; and hence there arises in the spiritual life the need of constant guard and discrimination in the chamber of thought, and at its gateways, the senses. Our LORD, as true Man, was capable of being acted on by external objects and suggestions. That which was mentally known, came with a fresh force and inward effect when it was actually experienced. When He "*beheld* the city,"* He wept over it. The external object presented to the senses aroused the slumbering emotion in the Redeemer's Soul. When He "saw Mary weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her,"† He too wept; He caught the infection of their sorrow. We find Him often thus moved with compassion at the sight of affliction. We see Him affected with wonder and admiration when He "*heard*" the centurion's faith. Of the young man who came "running, and kneeled to Him," we are told, "JESUS *beholding* him loved him."‡ His foreknowledge did not interfere with this law of human experiences. CHRIST'S desires could be called out and intensified by the pre-

* S. Luke xix. 41. † S. John xi. 33-35.
‡ S. Mark x. 21.

sence of an object which, though the senses appealed to them, or by the proposal of a possible mode of instantly gratifying them. It was, as of old, in the garden of Eden the external object and the Tempter's inducement brought desire and positive law into an intensified collision. "If thou be the SON of GOD, command this stone that it be made bread;" the stones being possibly by their form and colour, it has been said, suggestive of loaves.

For temptation to be possible, the being who is tempted must possess a power of choice; free-will, then, is the last and formal element of temptation. The will in us stands between "the pleasures of sin" on the one side, and the claims of the Moral Law on the other, and makes its choice. The Will in CHRIST stands between the pure cravings of His Human Nature on the one hand, and the Good-pleasure of GOD on the other, and makes its choice. Our choice is between bad and good; His, between what is innocent and what would be best. CHRIST would not be perfect man did He not possess the faculty of free-will, neither could He be capable of trial or of merit, unless He had the power of moral choice.

His Human faculties do not transcend the limits of a creature, though assumed by a Divine Person. In the domains of virtue and vice, His Will would simply be employed in the infinite hatred of the one and love of the other, in every shape and form; but His Will would have also an opportunity of putting forth its strength when it was possible to take either the path of sacrifice or that of gratification without traversing the lines which separate good from evil; when love and obedience would rather follow the indications of what would be most pleasing to the Father's Will, than assent to the desires of nature. That the good-pleasure of the Father was to Him a Law of Life we know from His own words, "He that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please Him."* And so on the other hand we have S. Paul's authority for saying that this pleasing of the Father involved a sacrifice of His own feelings and desires. "Even CHRIST," says the Apostle, "pleased not Himself."† When the Tempter suggested the miracle of converting a stone into bread, and so satisfying therewith

* S. John viii. 29. † Rom. xv. 3.

the pangs of hunger, CHRIST'S Perfect Will was called into true exercise; on the one hand, He denied to His lower Nature what it then craved; He denied the gratification of the desires of the flesh; and on the other, He preserved His Human Will in perfect conformity with the Divine Will, not only with its demands, but with its good-pleasure. The answer, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeded out of the mouth of GOD," implies this:—that every expression of the Divine Mind, not only every absolute precept, but every revelation of the Divine Mind, was the secret food of CHRIST'S Human Soul; and that that food must not be forfeited to meet the cravings of the flesh. Life had to be sustained in higher as well as lower regions, and in higher first; as on another occasion He said, when the question again turned upon food, "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me, and to finish His work."

CHRIST longed for food; it was the Father's Will that no miracle should be then wrought to relieve His hunger. He who fed the famished multitudes is not now to work a miracle on His own behalf, nor in the presence of the

being who solicits such an exhibition of Divine Power; the desire of the flesh and the higher Will clash; Satan presents the idea and object which suggests instant gratification, and the Will of CHRIST controls the lower desire, and makes oblation of the pain which the restraint costs Him to the Father. Here there is all that constitutes genuine temptation.

We have thus considered the component parts of a temptation, and traced them in the first temptation of CHRIST. It has been asserted, that "unless peccability be supposed, temptable is impossible;"* but, on the contrary, we contend that the view we have taken of this Mystery provides a real temptation and inward struggle, where sin does not enter into the question. In Adam the violation of a positive law was sin, when that law was an absolute commandment; but in CHRIST there were higher communications of the Divine Pleasure, and indications of what would be most agreeable to the Divine Mind, which partook not of the binding nature of an expressed prohibition or commandment, but became a law to CHRIST and a rule of obedience through the perfection of

* ULLMAN'S *Sinlessness of Christ.*

His Love for the Father: "That the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father gave me commandment, so I do."*

The Humanity was exposed to all the violence of temptation by the Divine Nature, and had to meet those assaults with grace, as we meet them. The struggle, as far as possible, was the same as in us. The lifeboat must brave the same storm, and plough through the same foaming billows, which threaten to engulph her, as the wrecked vessel to which she bears relief; and though so constructed as to be able to bear up against the fury of the waves, she needs the careful steerage, persevering efforts, ay, and courage, of those who venture forth to save the sinking ship. The Human Will of JESUS braved the storm of Temptation, and though unable to be overwhelmed, yet suffered the tension, the toil, and the weariness of the conflict, to bring us relief; not even sustaining itself by the conscious stay of the Higher Nature, but so far reaching down to us in our weakness and apprehensiveness as to be able to cry out, "Save me, O GOD; for the waters are come in, even unto my soul."†

* S. John xiv. 31. † Ps. lxix. 1.

Now, it may be said, 'After all, is not temptation, such as we have been considering, something, if we may so speak, set in too high a key for it to be compared with our struggles, or to acquire sympathy with us?' In reply, we would say that there are several truths which must be taken into calculation, when comparing temptation in CHRIST with temptation in our own case.

Without doing more than allude to the opinion that Satan was permitted to tempt CHRIST with unrestrained power, whereas in the case of all others there are certain limits assigned to him when he makes his assaults; it must be remembered, that the desires which are original and form a part of pure nature are in the long run the more intense; the sinful desires may be hot and impulsive, but these are not the expression of the necessities of our being, and are not so long sustained. The cry of intense hunger is the cry of agony. The fearful resorts of those in famine or siege, of which we read in sacred and in secular histories, are enough to prove the intensity of a craving which is imperious, inexorable, and at last savage. We cannot then attempt to

measure the violence of desire in CHRIST'S Humanity for food, when that desire was the result of the reaction after a forty days' fast, on the withdrawal of supernatural support.

Again, in temptations which have to do, not with base objects, but with things simply forbidden or less good, the soul cannot exercise itself in that which is one of the most powerful of deterrent motives, the odiousness and intrinsic evil of the object.

And further, when we compare CHRIST'S struggles with our own, we must take into account the finer sensibilities of His uncorrupt Nature. We know what a difference there is amongst ourselves in our capacities for trial—how the more delicate the feelings, the more sensitive the nerves, the more educated the mind, the more tender the heart, the greater, oftentimes, is the inward sense of trial, and the whole being becomes quiveringly alive to a temptation which a less refined nature knows only in its own dull way. Such thoughts may help us a little to realise, that the temptation of CHRIST was not only real, but intense, and therefore qualified Him for entering into our trials with the sympathy which experience alone

can give. By the first assault He acquired a sympathy which extends to the whole realm of sensuous temptations, and brings each one, whatever may be his temptation, within its reach. Whatever may be the shape or direction the desires of the flesh may assume through the importation of corruption, the native desire —which lies at the root of all subsequent and corrupt longings in us—thrilled with the intensity of the assault in the wilderness, and with the resistance which the royal Will of CHRIST in the first temptation imposed on it; and that struggle was of a representative character, purchasing for CHRIST sympathy with all who are tempted.

Tasting the struggles with the flesh in a form which was possible to Him, He could by His all-embracing knowledge and love put to account that experience where the collision would be,—as it could not be in Him—between corrupt desire and the Moral Law, in forms of temptation which are most humiliating; for, as an old writer says, when we sin in pride, we sin in company with the angels; when we sin in avarice, in fellowship with man; but when we sin in sensuality, we

sink to the level of the beast that perisheth:—in those forms of temptations which have a special moral turpitude, and which if yielded to bring darkness of soul and general degradation—in those forms of temptation which, above all others, from their violent or inveterate nature, tend to produce despondency and hopelessness of victory—it is something, indeed, to be able to look up to the Pure and All-Holy CHRIST, and to know that His sympathy may even reach out to all through the medium of that temptation in which He curbed the flesh, and kept it in abiding subjection to the higher nature; and that the Merit of His struggle with an innocent desire, has gained for us strength in our conflict with the corrupt lusts of the flesh. Though under conditions so different, we can lean on a common experience, as with the Apostle we strive to keep under the flesh, and bring it into subjection.

This is the practical issue and drift of all that has been said. Reality of temptation brings reality of sympathy, stores up grace for the tempted, and glory for those who conquer. In the Heart of CHRIST abides the experience of the wilderness; in His Mind

the vivid recollection of the struggle; and as His members pass through their struggles with the Tempter, He is able to succour them with a grace and compassion which flow from this Mystery. It is no abstract truth or theological nicety which we have laboured to enunciate, and which has no relation to the Christian's inward life; on the contrary, if it be true, as Job says, that life is made up of temptation, a day will rarely pass wherein we shall not have needed CHRIST'S Sympathy to be our support, wherein we shall not only have needed to bow down before Him as our GOD, but to find in His Human Heart the pulses of a common sympathy, which more than ought else may serve to give us comfort and courage; and which may be our strength and stay in an hour when no other sympathy can reach us.

LECTURE V.

The Second Temptation.

"*Then the devil taketh Him up into the holy city, and setteth Him on a pinnacle of the temple, and saith unto Him, If thou be the* SON *of* GOD, *cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give His angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.* JESUS *said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the* LORD *thy* GOD."—MATT. iv. 5-7.

THERE was something in the resistance of our LORD, which took at once from Satan all hope of success in appealing to the sensual appetite. Satan does not venture to repeat the temptation which terminates in bodily delight, but commences another kind of enticement. In the first Temptation he tried to overthrow by means of the cravings of the flesh. He knew that the human soul, by its nature and union with the body, was keenly alive to its demands; and that Israel of old, when they had just passed through the Red Sea, and the echoes of

their triumph-song had scarcely died away, murmured because the water was bitter, and the bread was scarce. He had been successful with those forms of temptation, of which the angelic nature could have no experience, and delighted in the lusts of the flesh, as they provided him with an extended district in which to stir up antagonism against the Will of GOD. But from the promptitude, completeness, and calmness of CHRIST'S rejection of the proposal to work a miracle to meet His bodily necessities, Satan felt that he was in the presence of One over whom, through the sensual region at least, he had no chance of gaining any power. Satan may have at first stood in doubt of CHRIST'S sinlessness as well as of His Divinity; but of the former the failure of his attempts to make Him swerve from the path of righteousness become at once the evidence and the result. The Temptation stands as a great witness to the sinlessness of CHRIST; a sinlessness proved by the inability of the Evil One to overthrow it, though he put forth all his power in order to do so.

In the preceding lecture, we first saw what were, and what were not, the limits of temp-

tation in regard to CHRIST. Temptation was not simply external, nor only suffering from contact with the Tempter; the boundaries of the Mystery were to be found in the sinlessness, original purity, and Personal incapability of sinning in CHRIST. We then resolved a temptation into its constituent elements, and, finding all of them in CHRIST'S Temptation, concluded that with Him temptation involved a real struggle as it does with us. Those limits must be taken as belonging to the whole Mystery, and not simply to the first assault, in the consideration of which they are laid down; and the same mode of interpretation must be applied to the second and third Temptations, that its consistency may be maintained, and our LORD'S sympathy from real inward conflict may be extended to the other two sources of temptation. To affirm the reality of the first Temptation, and then, as one of old did, to resign the other two to the region of parable, imagination, or vision; or to institute an interpretation which will not admit of being applied to the three successive Temptations, is a most unsatisfactory way of dealing with the Mystery. Our purpose is to establish our LORD'S

sympathy with us in our struggles from an actual experience of kindred struggles Himself; and for this purpose to be completely gained, His sympathy must cover the whole area of temptation.

Let us first examine the order of the Temptations; secondly, Satan's purpose in this Temptation; and thirdly, let us see how it could be a real Temptation to CHRIST.

I. According to the Gospel of S. Matthew, the Temptation on the pinnacle of the temple was the second; and there is every reason to suppose that S. Matthew is adhering to the order of time, not because S. Matthew was an Apostle, and S. Luke only an Evangelist—a very dangerous way of accounting for the difference between them in their respective records of the Temptation, or in any other variation, and one most damaging to two of the Holy Gospels—but because of the historical character which the adverbs of time give to the narrative of the former. The use of 'when,' 'then,' and 'again,'*—so marked in the account of S. Matthew—is altogether absent in the account given by S. Luke. But a stronger evidence of S. Matthew's accu-

* S. Matt. iv. 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 11.

racy as to the order of time is to be found in the repulse which CHRIST gave to Satan in the third temptation, "Get thee hence, Satan!"*—a repulse which evidently marks the conclusion of the conflict. It has been thought that the poet preferred S. Luke's narrative, because it afforded the opportunity of representing the angels as ministering spirits in the act of conducting our LORD from the summit of the temple; but such an office, however much it may become them, would on this occasion resemble too much what Satan had just before demanded, to admit of its discharge. The unassisted Manhood concluded the Temptation, and the Evil One had withdrawn ere the blessed spirits approached to minister to the second Adam after the struggle.

Various reasons have been assigned to account for S. Luke's departure from the order of S. Matthew. One is that S. Luke had in view the Gentiles, for whom he chiefly wrote, and their dominant temptation was the love of the world—"After all these things do the Gentiles seek;"† whilst S. Matthew wrote for the Jews, in whom, as a privileged people, spiritual pride

* S. Matt. iv. 10. † S. Matt. vi. 32.

took precedence. Again, it has been suggested that the HOLY SPIRIT moved the Evangelist to adopt a different order from that which the Apostle used in recording the Temptation, that he might signify that the process of sin in souls is different: that in one soul sensuality leads to pride, in another to covetousness; and that thus two orders of temptation are given, lest we should imagine that the tactics of the Enemy were invariable. But the chief reason for this variation between the two Evangelists is to be found in the different stand-points from which they view the Mystery. S. Matthew, as the historian, regards it in relation to time; S. Luke views it from within, in its ethical connection. The tree of old was "good for food," "pleasant to the eyes," and "a tree to be desired to make one wise." * That is S. Luke's order. It is the same with S. John—"The lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life." † There is a natural gradation between the temptations in this order: the first is sensual entirely; the second has a mixed character, being partly sensual and partly spiritual; the third is exclusively spiritual.

* Gen. iii. 6. † 1 S. John ii. 16.

A record of the same event, differently related, is often to be found in the Gospels, and of this the account of the Temptation is an instance, which must not be supposed to indicate any inaccuracy on the part of the Evangelists, but should lead us to trace some deep harmony of truth which for a moment the outward variation, whilst it awakens our suspicion of it, may yet hide from our view. Such variations are pledges of the genuineness and independency of the sacred writers, and are also warnings to us not to regard truths or Mysteries exclusively from one point of view. It may sometimes be necessary to transpose the historic order in the spiritual application of the Mysteries of CHRIST. Thus, S. Paul deals with the Resurrection and Passion as S. Luke deals with the second and third Temptations,—in those glowing words of desire which from his prison-house he pours forth—"That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings." He places the Resurrection before the Passion, because it was only through the communication of the Risen Life to his soul that he was enabled to bear suffering aright

The historical order was one, the spiritual application another; the order was reversed. It is the stand-point from which Mysteries, or the successive acts of a Mystery, are viewed, which regulates the order of the record of them.

Thus, if in the presence of two persons a musician strikes the first three notes of an octave, but not in their order, one witness may give one account, and the other another of the sounds which he heard: one may give the musical order, independent of the order in which the notes were struck; whilst the other may adhere to the actual order of the notes as they were struck, and not of their musical succession.* Many apparent discrepancies in point of time between the Evangelists, may be reconciled by ascertaining the different aspects which they are respectively taking. Parables or miracles are not associated together and transported from their historical position without some reason, and that reason may often be found in the inward connection between them. Whilst

* *e. g.* If A, B, C were struck in the order A, C, B: one, on being asked, may say he heard A, C, B, thinking only of the order in which the sounds reached him; the other may say, A, B, C, making his reply according to their progressive connection.

one may give the order of time, another may be guided to make a classification, which necessitates a sacrifice of historical sequence. We miss much if we fail to learn in the pages of the New Testament, not only from the events which are related, but also from their juxtaposition in the different Gospels.

The psychological order, as it may be called—"the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life"—is not the order of origination, nor necessarily of human experience. The generation of sin in an unfallen nature is from above, and not from beneath; from spiritual, and not from carnal rebellion. The introduction of sin in man is an image and miniature of its commencement and extension in the Universe. It began with the angels, and descended into human nature: it begins with our highest faculties, and afterwards throws into rebellion the lower passions. First, the mind is overthrown by the mind; and then, and not till then, can the mind be overthrown by the flesh. "Pride is the beginning of sin."* Many movements may concur in its production, and therefore sometimes the sin of our first

* Eccl. x. 13.

parents is described as gluttony, sometimes as curiosity, unbelief, or imprudence, disobedience; but the first disorder is found in the inner craving of the mind after some spiritual good which is in excess of the measure of the Divine Will. This mental thirst may set into motion other desires, which first result from and then strengthen it; but through it sin *enters*. "Your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil," constitutes the fascination of the finite creature,—the temptation to step beyond the boundaries of truth, and to grasp at a power and wisdom which are inconsistent with the conditions of created life. The mind rebels against GOD, and then the flesh against the mind, so that the order of origination in an unfallen nature is the reverse of that given by S. John or S. Luke. Again, in experience, if the Temptation be taken as a representation of the successive struggles of human life, the order of S. Matthew is certainly the most common. The predominance of temptations of the flesh in youth, of ambition and pride in manhood and public life, of avarice and of earthliness in old age, will be admitted. It is far more important to us that the

temptations occur so as to correspond with the different stages of human life, than that we should accept the arrangement of S. Luke for the sake of an abstract consideration: and, if it may be said we have in this the authority of S. Augustine against us; it may be replied, that we have S. Ambrose on our side, who, though writing on S. Luke, forsakes his order of the Temptation, and follows S. Matthew's. Having, then, dealt with this seeming discrepancy between the two Evangelists, and having chosen S. Matthew for our guide, we are free now to pass to the consideration of the Temptation itself.

II. Satan does not venture to tempt our LORD without the aid of external circumstances, as he sometimes does in dealing with a corrupt mind, but relies on the assistance of the outward occasion. He transports CHRIST from the wilderness to the pinnacle of the Temple. We are not told how this journey was effected, but we must conclude that it was performed in some extraordinary manner for two reasons:—it is evident that the three temptations occurred in rapid succession at the close of our SAVIOUR'S Fast, and that there could not have been time to pass from the wilderness to the Temple, and

from the Temple to the Mount on foot—"It is not wonderful," says one of old, "that CHRIST should permit Himself to be taken about by Satan, when He permitted Himself to be crucified by his members;" and again, the entrances to the Temple were guarded, so that no man might pass to the summit by the steps which led up to it. Our LORD, then, suffered Himself to be brought thither by the Evil One, allowing Himself to be conducted to the pinnacle, but not putting forth His own power in reaching it; for that was the very power which Satan questioned. Having, then, placed CHRIST on the pinnacle, wing, or roof of the Royal Porch, Satan thus addressed Him: "If thou be the SON of GOD, cast thyself down." We have to notice here Satan's doubt; his purpose, the argument with which he supported it; and the passion to which he appealed.

(1.) And, first, Satan stood in doubt as to the Divinity of CHRIST. We have already alluded to this; but now, on the repetition of the words "if thou be the SON of GOD," in the second temptation, we will enquire a little more minutely into this question, as it is of prime importance.

There are four grounds on which the opinion

that Satan was fully convinced that CHRIST was the SON of GOD is usually based. Sometimes it is urged on grammatical grounds, and then it is said that "if thou art" is equal to "seeing thou art." Again, this opinion is derived from a certain explanation of the fall of the angels; it is said that Satan fell, through not accepting the Mystery of the Incarnation, and therefore must have known that JESUS CHRIST was the SON of GOD. Thirdly, the fact is brought forward that the devils knew CHRIST when He exercised His power upon them, as recorded in the Gospels; as, for instance, in the expulsion of devils, when they cried, "What have we to do with thee, JESUS, thou SON of GOD?"* And again, He would not suffer the "devils to speak, because they knew Him."† To the fruitless attempts of one to expel them, the evil spirit answered, "JESUS I know." And lastly, the outward manifestations of CHRIST'S greatness are said to have been sufficient to convince Satan of His Divinity. But not one of these arguments is sufficient, neither is their cumulative force sufficient, to render the position we have taken untenable: a position, be it re-

* S. Matt. viii. 29. † S. Mark i. 34.

membered, which has the support of almost all ancient writers; it was evident to them that Satan must have been ignorant either of our LORD'S Divinity, or of the way He would work out our Redemption; or else, neither would he himself have tempted Him, nor would he have urged men to crucify Him. There is nothing inconsistent with Divine truthfulness in allowing Satan to be deceived, and to fall into judicial blindness as to the Mystery of Reedmption; in order that he might adopt a policy which would be subversive of his interests, and would at last undermine his own kingdom.

With regard to the four grounds on which the opposite opinion, namely, that Satan fully knew CHRIST, rests, we would make the following remarks. As to the first, the best scholars affirm that the clause in question, "If thou be the SON of GOD," may either be taken as expressing a doubt or a condition, and that the context must decide in which sense it is to be used; but when it is allied to the demand for a miracle of demonstration, it simply assumes the air of an enquiry. Nothing can be decided on an opinion as to the fall of the angels, which is grounded on an interpretation which

is not the only one of that event; and, moreover, if Satan had been fully aware of the decree of the Incarnation, it would not follow that he recognised the Human Form in which that Incarnation took place. Whether the cries of the evil spirits were prompted simply by fear or suspicion, or by some real knowledge of the Divinity of CHRIST, we cannot say; but they were subsequent to the Temptation, and the miracles of CHRIST might have been the means of subsequently convincing the Evil One of CHRIST'S True Greatness, though he still remained in darkness as to the mode of Redemption. Besides those manifestations of Glory, from the angels, the shepherds, the Magi, from Simeon in the Temple, and lastly and chiefly at CHRIST'S Baptism, there were counter manifestations; namely, the weakness of Infancy, the workshop at Nazareth, the submission to His parents, the emaciation from the long fast, the humiliation to which He subjected Himself in enduring the Temptation, all of which pointed in an opposite direction, and were surely sufficient to make the Author of doubt at least doubtful of CHRIST'S Divinity.

Satan, then, was in doubt; a doubt perhaps

increased by CHRIST's refusal to work a miracle for His bodily support—at any rate not removed by it; for Satan is not convinced by virtue, and does not accredit any one with a power which he refuses to exercise. He did not believe in Job's integrity because he was faithful under the first trial; he expected that he would yield under a sharper chastisement. And now he makes his second attempt upon CHRIST in the same spirit.

(2.) But he had a very different purpose in view in the second Temptation from that which he had in the first. Both Temptations were complex, and addressed the soul as well as the body. The second Temptation was the opposite of the first. In the first, he aimed at imparting a distrust of the ordinary providence of GOD; in the second, he desired to excite an undue trust in the extraordinary providence of GOD. In the first he appealed to our sense of self-protection, and desired a miraculous supply of food for the preservation of the body: in the second he urged on CHRIST an act of self-destruction, by casting His body down from the roof of the Temple.

In this mode of proceeding, our LORD'S

Temptation unveils another of the devices of the Enemy; which is to form fresh snares out of our victories, and to attempt to lead us into some excess in that which is good, when he discovers our bent of mind. Our LORD trusted in the wilderness; therefore he would strive to make Him trust unduly. Trust he would stretch into presumption. Thus, those who practise fasting and mortification he would have them carry their self-denial to excess, that thereby health may be injured and higher duties neglected. Again, those who are drawn to prayer and contemplation through its sweetness and delight, he would render forgetful of those active duties which belong to their state of life. Those who were eager to know themselves by diligent self-examination, he would endeavour to overthrow by scrupulosity and indecision. He strives to destroy that which is good by making it become inordinate; and therefore there is the utmost need of watchfulness, in order to preserve the true balance between various graces and opposing claims of duty.

Temptations quickly change, and when in conquering despair the impression of trust is

fresh on the heart, then is presumption more liable to gain an entrance. We must be careful, then, not to overrate our victories, and to measure advancement by the absence of old temptations. A change of temptations may be mistaken for a victory. The temptations which were once troublesome, and it may be which overcame us, may be withdrawn as life advances, or new sets of circumstances arise. New passions develop, and old ones lose their fire. Or again, victories of passion may take the place of victories of grace; for the passions through the fall have a conflict amongst themselves, and sloth may vanquish pride, or ambition sloth, without any displacement of evil by grace, and therefore without any progress in sanctification.

Again, the order of the Temptations warns us to beware lest after a victory we become presumptuous. "I said, in my prosperity, I shall never be removed: thou, LORD, of thy goodness, hast made my hill so strong."* Victory over temptations of the flesh may be quickly and easily followed by temptations of the spirit; or, temptations to despair be succeeded by temptations to presumption. The human mind often

* Ps. xxx. 6, 7.

oscillates between extremes, from defect to excess. At one time S. Peter is saying, "LORD, thou shalt never wash my feet;"† and the next moment, "LORD, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head." At one time the Corinthians are sinfully lenient towards the incestuous person; at another, they are full of undue severity. In philosophic systems of the Heathen world, and in the heresies which from time to time called forth fresh dogmatic expressions from the church, we see the same principle of recoil. At one time sensuality is encouraged; at another, a rigorous repression of innocent affections. At one time the Divinity of CHRIST is imperfectly grasped; and then, when that truth is authoritatively affirmed, defective views of His Humanity follow. Satan calculated on this swing of the mind, and thus purposes, now that CHRIST has avoided one extreme, to entrap Him in another, knowing that we are liable by the very care which we take against a fault to be betrayed into committing its opposite.

It was said that the temptation was complex, and had reference to the body as well as to

† S. John xiii. 8, 9.

the mind. Let us take the lower side of it now, and see Satan's purpose in reference to CHRIST'S human life.

The act which Satan suggested would on the one hand be a certain indication of Divinity, if successfully accomplished; or, on the other, result in loss of life, if attempted by a creature. In the first temptation failure to effect what was proposed would have brought with it no harm; in the second, failure would involve instant death. Satan's idea of CHRIST'S Divinity was waning, because CHRIST did not work the miracle he proposed, by turning stones into bread. It may be that he interpreted this refusal into an inability on the part of CHRIST to do a supernatural act, and thus he tempts CHRIST to perform an action which was in itself possible for the creature to attempt, especially when under the influence of some vain presumption on extraordinary protection. His object was, then—to put it in plain words—that CHRIST might be dashed to pieces on the ground. He knew well that GOD would not miraculously preserve a creature who thus unnecessarily exposed himself to danger; especially when that danger was incurred in order

that his extraordinary preservation might be the sign and attestation of Divinity. Satan was thus engaged in his old work. He was from the beginning the cause of death in all forms:—"For GOD made not death, neither hath He pleasure in the destruction of the living."* "Satan," said CHRIST, "was a murderer from the beginning,"† and this not only because he was the author of that disintegration which sin ultimately causes, but also because he excites the human passions in order to hasten, or prematurely occasion, the destruction of human life. Any one of the passions may be the instrument which he employs in bringing about this end. Envy leads to it in Cain; pride, in Saul and Ahithophel; covetousness and despair, in Judas; despondency leads to the desire of death in Elijah and Jonah; lust and intemperance produce the same result when they run their course. Each passion in its final development may be the cause of destruction of life, either one's own or another's. Sometimes this temptation is dressed in the garb of courage and magnanimity; sometimes it is clothed with a religious motive, such as satis-

* Wisdom, i. 13. † S. John viii. 44.

faction for sin; and sometimes self-destruction presents itself as an heroic escape from trials and present pain, from defilement or ignominy. Indeed "the doctrine of suicide was the culminating point of Roman stoicism"*—a doctrine which had such power and prevalence, that one, we are told, who taught it, had to be banished in order to put a stop to his baleful influence. The second Temptation raises the curtain, and shows us who was the prime source of those views of life and death with which the Pagan mind was so generally imbued, and who still, though on rare occasions, is able to effect his purposes, and often hides his work, now that it is no longer commended, under the cloke of a diseased mind.

It must be remembered that, not only to destroy, but to imperil human life, whether through wantonness or for gain, in order to gratify the morbid taste of beholders, is in a measure a result of the same secret workings of him who "cometh not but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy," thereby manifesting his hatred of that nature which GOD would assume.

The hasty expression of a wish for death

* LECKY, *Hist. Europ. Morals*, vol. i. pp. 226-234.

which often rises to the lips of the passionate, the proud, the disappointed, and the despairing, in the moment of temptation, though not really meant, is nevertheless a token of the ultimate misery which that passion, if permitted to develop itself, would work, and sometimes does work, though its awful consequence is often set down to mental and not to moral disorder.

Again, the second Temptation has this peculiarity, that it was backed with an argument, and an argument of a very specious nature. Satan asserted as a reason for the act he suggested, that it would occasion the fulfilment of a prophecy: "He shall give His angels charge over thee. . . . They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone." He was not simply supporting his assault by a quotation from Holy Scripture, and thus imitating CHRIST, but he appealed to the great truth, that all the promises of the Old Testament were to be fulfilled in CHRIST, so that CHRIST would by casting Himself down prove the Fidelity of GOD as well as His own Messiahship. It has often been noticed how Satan garbled the quotation, omitting "in all thy ways" as suggestive of GOD'S protecting care,

which he would fain keep out of sight. As S. Bernard says, He shall protect thee "in ways, not in precipices. This is, not a way, but a fall; and if it is a way, it is thine, not His." Satan wisely too, stops short; for the next verse runs—as if the Spirit had been dwelling already upon the use which would be made of this promise of angelic custody—"Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder: the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under thy feet."* All these are names of Satan, as S. Gregory remarks, both revealing different aspects of his character, and different results of his working in human nature. We see how Satan not only used CHRIST'S trust in His Father, which the answer to the first temptation revealed, from which to frame the second temptation, but also laid hold of CHRIST'S weapon of defence. It is important to notice this, that we may be on our guard against temptations which come from misquotations or misapplications of texts of Scripture; and that we may recognize the need of an Authoritative Teacher as not only witness and keeper, but also as exponent of Inspired Writings—"I should not believe the

* Ps. xci. 13.

Gospel," said S. Augustine, "unless the authority of the Church moved me to do so;"—and that we may cultivate the inner light of conscience, lest "the things that should have been for our wealth be unto us an occasion of falling."

The text which Satan adduced would be fulfilled, but not then—not at his instance, nor in that manner. Angels who are ministers of Divine Providence may become, when there is a departure from the ways of GOD, the ministers of Divine Wrath, as when "the angel of the LORD stood in a path of the vineyards, a wall being on this side, and a wall on that side. And when the ass saw the angel of the LORD, she thrust herself unto the wall, and crushed Balaam's foot against the wall." * Thus the angel caused that which in the promise angels are said to prevent. Their protection depends on the lines of the Providence of GOD being carefully preserved; and to outstep those lines in order to put to the test His Attributes, was, as our LORD described it, to tempt GOD.

(3.) Satan appealed to the pride of the human heart. In the substance of the temptation, he

* Num. xxii. 24, 25.

sought to call out one form of it; in the circumstances of the temptation, another. He cunningly constructed the temptation, so that it might be calculated to awaken both presumption and vain-glory. The act which he proposed was one which could be carried into effect from any eminence; but he is careful to choose a spot which possessed not only the qualification of height, but of publicity. He "taketh Him up into the holy city, and setteth Him on a pinnacle of the temple." Satan tempts to distrust in the wilderness, but to love of display on the pinnacle of the temple. He thus provides one ingredient of temptation—the external occasion. The abutment or wing of the temple was a suitable place for exciting a vain-glorious act. As presumption,—the side of pride in relation to GOD; so vain-glory,—the side of pride in relation to man, were each to have a share in this complex temptation: so that if one failed the other might be successful, or that both combined may afford a sufficient inducement. Satan thus addresses a passion from different sides at once, when he has felt the strength of resistance in any soul; or when, being in doubt, he is searching about for some

sign of weakness. As with the lusts of the flesh he approached with a temptation in its finest form; so, when addressing the desires of the mind, he uses no gross consideration, but suggests thoughts of spiritual pride in a most subtle manner. He tries the temptation to which a pure angel was not insensible; that which is 'the first temptation to come and the last to go,' 'the arrow that flieth by day;' that which feeds more on virtues than on vices; that which is the 'secret spoiler' of holiness; that which is abominable in the sight of GOD, because it robs Him of His inalienable right, and turns the creature from his Final End, making the creature serve the creature, rather than the creature the Creator; that which destroys all merit in works, however laborious, which are done to be 'seen of men;' that which could turn an Archangel into a Devil; that which therefore is rightly, as S. Chrysostom says, styled "the mother of hell"—the temptation of vain-glory!

Thus we have considered Satan's doubt of CHRIST'S Divinity; the purpose for which he tempted CHRIST, the argument he employed; and the passion to which on two sides he

appealed. Now let us see how his proposal could be a real temptation to CHRIST.

III. For a temptation to be real, that is to occasion an internal struggle, we must find in it the five ingredients which compose it (as stated in the fourth lecture); namely, desire, law, collision between desire and law, suggestion, and free-will. If, then, these be discovered in the second temptation, we shall conclude that our LORD'S was a genuine struggle in this case as in the former. This principle of interpretation may be less clearly seen in this temptation than in the first, as the temptation itself is more subtle, and appertains to the invisible workings of the mind, and not to the palpable cravings of the flesh. Temptations which are purely spiritual are of course with greater difficulty subjected to analysis than those which are carnal.

Satan was exploring the Divinity of CHRIST, and tempted Him to reveal it in an unmistakable manner, and in a public and most sacred spot.

That CHRIST had natural desires, arising from the demands of the body, which were not gratified at the suggestion of Satan, has

been already seen; but now we go further, and point to desires of His Human Soul which were not gratified. When Satan confronted Him with the second temptation, did he not find in CHRIST a desire which would have responded to it? We may believe he did. All that was truly human was in CHRIST; the finite, though linked with the Infinite, lost nothing of its own proper action by that Union. As Pure and Holy Man, He loved those around Him—relations, friends, nation, with the different affections of relationship, friendship, and patriotism; and loving them, He desired to confer upon them that which would be the highest benefit they could receive—the true knowledge of Himself. As Redeemer, He desired to reveal Himself to those who looked for and needed Redemption. That He possessed desires, apart from bodily cravings, which nevertheless were never gratified, may be seen in the words with which He apostrophised Jerusalem, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem . . . how often *would* I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not."*

* S. Matt. xxiii. 37. ἠθέλησα.

There was desire, and it was unsatisfied. When Satan said "Cast thyself down," he appealed to an intense desire in CHRIST to vindicate the truth of the promises of GOD, and to manifest His Divinity to man in a manner which would carry with it irresistible conviction.

But there was a law of the Divine manifestation, which (and not natural desire) was the guide of His Life—"CHRIST pleased not Himself." The natural desire of the human heart may prompt to a manifestation at a time when, or in a degree in which GOD willed not, and thus the Divine pre-appointment would come into collision with the human affection; and hence the desire would have to be restrained. The reason for not casting Himself down is that it is not the Will of the Father; in all things this Will was directing CHRIST'S steps. Of His words He says, "Whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak;" * of His actions—"The Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He seeth the Father do." †

In nothing was this controlling power of the Father's Will so conspicuous as in the matter of

* S. John xii. 50. † S. John v. 19.

time. CHRIST remains in Nazareth until thirty years of age in obscurity; in working miracles, the outpouring of Divine Power was subject to some mysterious regulation as to time. He not only works the works of Him that sent Him, but at those points of time where they were appointed to be wrought. This is especially manifest with regard to the first miracle,* and in the case of the resurrection of Lazarus;† so in going up to the Feast, Jesus speaks thus—"My time is not yet come: but your time is alway ready."‡ He avoids bringing on the Passion before the time which was appointed of the Father. It was "when the time was come that He should be received up, that He stedfastly set His Face to go to Jerusalem." § It is evident, then, that the innocent and natural desires of His Human Heart were restrained by that higher law of the Father's Will, with which His reasonable Will was ever in most perfect harmony—a harmony, however, which does not preclude that sharp opposition between the cravings of pure nature, whether of flesh or of affection, and the demands of the Divine Purpose, the collision

* S. John ii. 4. † S. John xi. 6.
‡ S. John vii. 6. § S. Luke ix. 51.

between which gave occasion for the constant exercise of sacrifice. The temptation to put His Divine Power into operation at the call of the human heart, must have been not only on the Temple, but also oftentimes felt by CHRIST. For instance, when He went down to Nazareth, where He had lived so long, and for whose inhabitants He must have entertained a special love, how must He have longed to reveal Himself, so as to compel an acknowledgment of His Divinity; but "He did no mighty work there because of their unbelief."* As self-restraint would be needed when nature called for a miracle for its own relief, so self-restraint was needed when affection called for the exercise of miraculous powers in relation to others.

There was a wonderful admixture of hiddenness and manifestation even in the Public Life of CHRIST. It would be contrary to the law of our probation, that He should so reveal Himself as to leave no moral choice to the beholder. There was enough evidence to take away all excuse for infidelity, but not enough evidence to take away all merit from faith. As with the

* S. Matt. xiii. 58.

evidences of religion, there is a point where a moral force must sustain and complete the mental process, so that conviction may be the result not of a single faculty, but of the conjoint operation of the whole being; so even with those who beheld CHRIST in the flesh, the manifestations of Divinity were not so overwhelming as to make them exceptions to that test which all other moral beings have to undergo. The highest manifestations of the Divinity in the Resurrection and Ascension did not carry men away on an overwhelming tide of conviction. To S. Thomas, when he felt the Wounds, and fell in adoration before his Risen LORD, it is said, "Because thou hast seen me, thou hast *believed*;" there was still room for faith. And at the Mount of the Ascension, as if to assure us that even then, as now, beings had their moral choice of disbelieving or believing the evidences of religion, it is said, "When they saw Him, they worshipped Him: but some *doubted*." When Satan appealed to CHRIST for a decisive act of Self-manifestation, he appealed to a desire which must have frequently presented itself to the Man CHRIST JESUS, namely, to reveal Himself, so as to force

the darkened mind and reluctant will to acknowledge and accept those blessings, which He could only impart when the soul yielded herself up to receive them. "Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life," are words which reveal both the desire and the disappointment. The law of manifestation, which human probation necessitated, clashed with the yearning desires of the Heart of CHRIST, which were restrained by His Will. The desire to manifest Himself to "His own" who rejected Him, and to all, with such a display of Divinity as would enforce an universal acknowledgment; the desire to work miracles out of human sympathy, when the indisposition of the beholders or participants was a hindrance, even to the Omnipotent One; was often, we may believe, the source of a genuine struggle in CHRIST, and especially when from the Temple He was bidden to manifest Himself by casting Himself down.

The place itself formed an element of the trial. Our LORD stood in full view of the Temple courts which were beneath Him. Those courts were ever thronged with worshippers. To those courts were drawn those who had spiritual instincts, who cherished

heavenly desires, who looked for Redemption in Israel, to whom the sight of the Messiah was the chief longing of their heart; and the Temple was the very place where they expected Him to appear. Prophecies had guided them to that sacred spot, as the one where He would reveal Himself.—"The glory of this latter house" was thus to become "greater than the former."—"The LORD, whom they sought, was to come suddenly to His Temple." The place therefore, and the assembled worshippers, suggested the manifestation which was proposed, and angel hosts would willingly have encircled Him, as He passed from the roof to make His Court below, and ministered to Him when enthroned within the sacred precincts of His Father's House. But the manifestation was withheld, the Father's Will obeyed, the human desire overcome, and the subtle proposal of the Enemy represented in its true character—"Thou shalt not *tempt* the LORD thy GOD."

And here we must guard against the thought that such a collision between human feeling or affection and the purposes of GOD attributes to the Divine Will a sternness and restraining action which are hardly in harmony with the

loving Nature of GOD; and which seem in one way to represent man as more loving than GOD. We must remember, that here we pass into that primal Mystery of free-will and the universal law of probation which set limits to CHRIST'S Self-manifestation; and further, that the manifestation was ever sufficient for those who willed to believe, and that its failure was through the effects of sin on the mind and will of man for which GOD is not accountable. The Love of the Father and the perfect knowledge of His Mind and Will did not destroy in CHRIST natural love and natural desires, but rather quickened and intensified them; and thus He could taste the pain of detachment when the rising of an innocent affection or desire had to be quelled by His reasonable Will, and brought under the law of a higher Love.

Thus, we have seen in what sense this second temptation could have been a real temptation to JESUS CHRIST. By resisting the temptation to an undue self-manifestation, He purchased sympathy with us in another region of trial, in temptations to 'the pride of life.' The sympathy which He acquired in the sensuous sphere is hereby extended to the sphere of self-conscious-

ness. All temptations which arise from a desire to be known, praised, and esteemed; all desires for honour, renown, and reputation; all cravings for a greatness which is self-devised, and not that genuine greatness which is produced by exact correspondence to the original idea and will of GOD, are homogeneous with this temptation. With us the motive is or may be corrupt, may be selfish and mercenary, mean and envious; but in the sinless CHRIST the desire was pure and innocent in itself—the desire to justify His Father's Care and to do good to man; a desire, however, which was contrary to the Will of GOD, and therefore not for one moment entertained; but the movement of His Human Soul was the same, and the repression the same, the struggle was only the more intense, because the desire of Self-manifestation arose from pure love—which is the strongest passion; how strong, we cannot say, in the Heart that had no experience of selfishness. Ours is a desire, corrupted by self-love: His was a desire, prompted by the love of others. Ours is a desire which is restrained by the Moral Law; His was a desire which was checked through obedience to the Good Pleasure of the Divine Will. His was the

subordination of that which is good to that which is better; ours is the restraint of that which is bad in order to become good. Whilst JESUS CHRIST purchased sympathy with us in all forms of temptation to pride and vain-glory; He also acquired grace for us, whereby we might overcome those subtle temptations in union with Him, and thus He sanctified by His Example the hidden life. Our LORD'S conduct in this Temptation is a great witness to a law of His Life, which He Himself thus expressed—"I seek not my own glory: there is one that seeketh and judgeth."

There were times, however, of manifestation as well as of concealment in the Life of CHRIST; both were regulated by the same law of obedience to the Divine Will, and both had as their end the Father's Glory. In the same way, in the Christian's Life, there are times when the duty of edifying our neighbour demands some outward expression of the inner life; but the times of expression and of concealment must be regulated by the knowledge of the Divine Will, as that Will is made known by the suggestions of the Spirit.

In this temptation the warning is against

manifestations which are contrary to the guidings of the Good SPIRIT, and are the outcome of vanity, or the result of the working of that spirit who can transform himself into an angel of light, and use Scripture as his instrument of deception. We must therefore "try the spirits whether they are of God." *

There are marks whereby the HOLY SPIRIT'S movements may be distinguished from those of the Evil or human spirit. One sign that the suggestions are from the HOLY SPIRIT is the pure aim of *glorifying the* Father which His Presence instils into the soul. There is an absence of self-seeking and self-contemplation, because the gaze of the soul is concentrated upon GOD—"The love of GOD is shed abroad in our hearts by the HOLY GHOST." † Again, the Good SPIRIT ever seeks to reproduce some feature of the life of CHRIST, and thus His promptings will be found to *lead to* CHRIST—"He shall receive of mine, and shew it unto you." ‡ He will also lead us to that which is *pure* in relation to oneself, and that which is *lowly* and *loving* in relation to others. If these

* 1 S. John iv. 1. † Rom. v. 5.
‡ S. John xvi. 14.

marks are found, we may trustfully follow the guidance, whether it be in the path of concealment or edification, and in both the glory of the Father will be gained.

One thing, however, is certain, that, however grand the results may seem, HIS glory is never obtained by doing extraordinary actions, which are beyond HIS will and appointment. 'Not in precipices, but in our ways,' the angels will guard us; and our sanctification will be perfected. When Satan tempts to display the inner life for the edification of others, in some unwonted action, or when he tempts to resort to some extraordinary means—to the neglect of those which are ordinary—we must recall the second Temptation. We must be on our guard, for it may be that, when we think we are actuated by a pure motive, then the worm of self-love is hidden beneath it. It is at all times dangerous to act simply with a view to the edification of others; their edification should arise from the unconscious outflow of the life itself, and then the absence of self-consciousness will give to that effluence a strength and loveliness.

But these warnings are all subsidiary to

the main thought which we would throughout keep in view, which is this:—that that chord in the human soul, which is the basis of all temptations to pride and self-consciousness, was most deeply touched, and suffered such a tension as constitutes a genuine struggle, in the Soul of Christ; and that therefore to Him we can look for sympathy, and for that support which a common experience alone can give. Though our temptations, through our corruption, take a different direction, or are stimulated by a different motive, the strain is the same; and thus, when we are confronted by the Evil One with his own special snare, we can place ourselves under the protection of One who has vanquished him before; and, in the language of the Psalmist, pray for grace that we also may be successful in the conflict—"O let not the foot of pride come against me, and let not the hand of the ungodly cast me down."

LECTURE VI.

The Third Temptation.

"*Again, the devil taketh Him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth Him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; and saith unto Him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me. Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the* LORD *thy* GOD, *and Him only shalt thou serve.*"—MATT. iv. 8–10.

OF the three theological virtues—faith, hope, and love, the second has in some respects an especial importance. No order of beings can exercise this virtue beside ourselves. It is different with faith and love: of the former, at least, as an intellectual act, the devils are capable—"the devils believe, and tremble;" and in the latter, the angels in Heaven have their part; but hope is exclusively our own virtue; and it has a peculiar way of offering homage to GOD. Faith and love may have

nothing to say to His Character, when that Character is viewed in relation to ourselves. Faith is the realisation of His Being; love, of His Beauty; but hope grasps Him "as the principle of perfect goodness," and consequently trusts Him because of His Love to us. We may know and love any one, and at the same time feel no chance of any return of that love; but when we trust another, we then by that act bear witness to his goodness in regard to ourselves. But if, on the other hand, we are conscious in intercourse that we are distrusted, then there can be no lasting link of friendship or sweetness in associating together. Hope is that movement of the soul which has realised GOD'S Love for itself, and lives in that realisation.

And as this virtue is our own, and peculiarly gratifying to GOD on account of the homage it offers to His Goodness and Benignity, so have we an especial need of it; it is the virtue of the fallen, of those who amid "the waves of this troublesome world" have to contend with the results of the Fall, but to whom a Promise was given—a Promise, the gradual unfolding and fulfilment of which is like a beacon-light throughout a storm, which glows from a distant

summit, and towards which, as its rays now shine out and then wane, the mariners lift their eyes and direct their shattered bark.

This virtue, then, belonging so especially to mankind, honouring GOD with a worship of confidence, and sustaining man in the interval between the Fall and the Final Restoration; this virtue, for the sake of which a Revelation was given, "for whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope;"* this virtue, which, standing in the midst of faith and love, connects and reacts upon both: upon faith, which "is the substance of things hoped for,"† and upon love, which "hopeth all things,"‡ thus binding together and ministering to that which is less and to that which is greater than itself; this virtue of hope seems to be the especial object of attack on the part of Satan, and thus in the Mystery of the Temptation, which is a concentrated representation of his assaults upon Human Nature, though he strikes at faith and love, yet he seems to make hope the chiefest point of assault throughout the whole.

* Rom. xv. 4. † Heb. xi. 1. ‡ 1 Cor. xiii. 7.

In the first Temptation, Satan assaulted the virtue of hope on the side of *defect;* that is, he tempted to despair, to a distrust of Providence, and so to an unwarrantable mode of meeting the needs of the body. In the second Temptation, Satan assaulted the virtue of hope on the side of *excess*; that is, he tempted to presumption, to an excessive confidence, and so to an unwarrantable expectation of Divine intervention. In the third Temptation—which seems the greatest of all, and in which he throws off the mask,—he assaults the virtue of hope through the power of the *present:* he offers, as to the first Adam, a *present* gratification in lieu of that which is to come—"*In the day* ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened."* This last assault touched an essential feature of the object of hope; namely, that its realisation lies in the future, and must be attained, if at all, through a predestined struggle; for "hope that is seen is not hope."† Thus the virtue, which Satan supposed our LORD as a man to be capable of, was attacked from three different points: from its two vicious extremes —despair and presumption; and at its base,

* Gen. iii. 5. † Rom. viii. 24.

by offering the present possession of the kingdoms of the world—"Again, the devil taketh Him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth Him all the kingdoms of the world."

First, we will notice the preparation for this Temptation; secondly, the offer which was made; thirdly, we will endeavour to see how it could be a real Temptation to CHRIST.

I. CHRIST in His meekness suffered Himself again to be conveyed by Satan, now from the pinnacle of the Temple to "an exceeding high mountain." Tradition has fixed upon a steep mountain, called "Quarantana." It "rises precipitously, an almost perpendicular wall of rock, twelve or fifteen hundred feet above the plain."* "It was, they say, to this mountain the devil took our Blessed SAVIOUR when he tempted Him with the visionary scene of all the glories of the world; and in its ascent it is not only difficult, but dangerous." Others have supposed Nebo, or Gerizim, to be the spot. At any rate, it was some mountain with an extensive view such as could not be obtained from the pinnacle of the Temple, because the

* ROBINSON'S *Palestine*, vol. i. p. 567.

"hills stand about Jerusalem," and hinder the sight of the surrounding country.

Again, Satan suits the external circumstances to the Temptation, and draws his snare from them. It has been thought that in this act Satan was imitating GOD, Who brought Moses to the top of Pisgah, and then "shewed him all the land of Gilead, unto Dan, and all Naphtali, and all the land of Ephraim, and Manasseh, and all the land of Judah, unto the utmost sea, and the south, and the plain of the valley of Jericho, the city of palm trees, unto Zoar."* Satan from the first abode not in the truth, because he imitated GOD with an unjust and isolated imitation: unjust, in that he imitated that which the creature could not share—Independency; and isolated, in that he by that very act failed to copy the Moral Perfections of GOD, which he should have rightly imitated. And as with the beginning so with the continuance of evil, Satan imitated GOD'S ways or travestied them. As amongst the angels there are "seven holy angels which present the prayers of the saints, and go in and out before the glory of the Holy One,"† so amongst the

* Deut. xxxiv. 1-3. † Tobit xii. 15.

evil spirits the number seven seems preserved, and is mystically represented in the seven heads of the dragon, and morally by those seven spirits of evil—the instigators of the seven deadly sins. There is a hierarchy beneath, as well as above; for the fallen angels preserve their respective grades as natural conditions of their existence: but, besides this reflexion of Heaven, which arises from the continuance in angels of their relative position and natural gifts, there may be in their movements room for a travesty of the Heavenly Court.

Demoniacal possession has been regarded as a part of the same line of conduct,—imitating unjustly the ways of GOD. As there is a table of the LORD, so there is a table of Devils.* He has worshippers, sacrifices, victims; he tempted man to offer human victims—"They offered their sons and their daughters unto devils,"† thus venting his hatred on that bodily form which the SON of GOD would take. From the idea then that it is a custom with Satan to parody the ways of GOD, the third Temptation has been regarded as a specimen of this line of action.

* 1 Cor. x. 21. † Ps. cvi. 37.

Satan, by bringing CHRIST to the mountain top, was preparing to tempt Him through the instrumentality of the eye.

All the senses may be sources of temptation, but the chief amongst them is the eye. It is the sense in constant use, and that which is least dependent upon other persons. The ear requires the sound to be uttered; but the eye sees without assistance, save that of the light of heaven. It reaches, where other senses fail to travel, to the stars above and to the distant hills. It acts without any intervention of the will, which can hinder it from acting, or, by co-operating with it, can turn '*seeing*' into '*looking.*' It is more closely allied to the imagination than the other senses, and feeds it with objects. 'To see' is used to describe intellectual acts. It is this powerful sense which gives a name to a third of those fascinations which compose the spirit of the world, and call forth our irregular desires—"the lust of the eyes."* It is not only as other senses the passage through which temptation passes into the soul, as when Eve *saw* the tree which was "pleasant to the eyes;"† or, as when "the sons of GOD *saw* the daughters

* 1 S. John ii. 16. † Gen. iii. 6.

of men that they were fair;"* or, as when Achan "*saw* among the spoils a goodly Babylonish garment;"† or, as when David *saw* "Bath-sheba;"‡ or, as when Ahab *saw* the "vineyard in Jezreel, which was hard by the palace;"§ or, as when "all availed" Haman "nothing, so long as he *saw* Mordecai the Jew sitting at the king's gate;"‖—the eye thus not confining itself to ministering to the covetous desires, but also to the lusts of the flesh, and to the pride of life:—it is not only, as other senses, the entrance to the soul, but it is also the outlet—the organ through which sin is often expressed, as well as temptation introduced, as the psalmist declares, when he speaks of "the proud look;" or our LORD, when He describes envy as the "evil eye"—"Is thine eye evil because I am good?" As the eye is the avenue of temptation, so does it express the lust or passion, when the guilty pleasure or consent has turned temptation into sin. It was, then, through this powerful sense that Satan hoped to work on the affections and desires of CHRIST.

And now we must consider the presentation

* Gen. vi. 2. † Joshua vii. 21. ‡ 2 Sam. xi. 2.
§ 1 Kings xxi. 1. ‖ Esther v. 13.

of the object to CHRIST: Satan "shewed Him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them." S. Luke adds, that this was done "in a moment of time."* We are here called to examine the most difficult part of the Mystery. There are three ways of interpreting these words of the Evangelist. The first is, that Satan presented to CHRIST all the glories of the world by phantasm, by depicting distant objects upon the imagination of CHRIST, or by some illusion of the visual organs; that is, he supplemented the panorama upon which CHRIST could gaze from the mountain by some preternatural impressions: the second is, that GOD vouchsafed the sight of all the glories of the world to CHRIST, or rather, that CHRIST laid His Divinity under contribution (as in His Passion some have thought that He did, in order to add to His sufferings), and thus by His Omniscience brought within view the transient glory of all earthly kingdoms; the third is, that the language is hyperbolical, and that CHRIST saw only the surrounding districts of Canaan, and that Satan described the rest.

Now, the first interpretation has been objected

* S. Luke iv. 5.

to, because it seems to invest Satan with miraculous powers. To show CHRIST "not only the kingdoms of the world, but also all the glory of them; that is the wealth and treasures of their subjects . . . the splendour and magnificence of their sovereigns . . . as well as the whole exterior surface of the globe . . . and in a single instant of time . . . is one of the greatest miracles we can conceive."* Theologians, as a general rule, have shown great care in distinguishing between the "wonders" of Satan and genuine miracles, because to attribute the latter to Satan is to infringe upon the prerogative of GOD, to destroy the aid and use of miracles as evidences, and to contradict clear statements of Holy Scripture. GOD alone can innovate upon the regular course of nature. Satan can produce wonders by dexterously using the causes which exist; even when the magicians imitated the miracles of Moses and the rod became a serpent, and when the fire fell upon the cattle of Job, his miraculous action has been denied. The signs and wonders of false prophets, and of "him, whose coming is after the working of Satan

* FARMER *On the Temptation*, p. 25. A.D. 1765.

with all power and signs and lying wonders,"* —that culminating manifestation of evil—must be traced up either to a knowledge of secret causes already existing, or to some mode of hastening results in nature, or to deceptions of sense or of imagination whereby effects are wonderful to those who are not in possession of the same knowledge and dexterity, but not to the introduction of a new cause, not to any inroad upon the natural order of things—an act which is reserved to Him Alone, who thereby asserts His Presence, and bears witness to His Truth. Whether the presentation of the kingdoms of the world to CHRIST—supposing it to have been visionary—really involved the exercise of miraculous powers, or could be accounted for by those hallucinations which were properly in Satan's reach, we need not pause to enquire; because we consider it to be inconceivable on the side of CHRIST that He should have permitted His faculties, whether the eye or the imagination, to have been thus played upon and deceived. One of old says—who accepted this interpretation of hallucination, "The faithful soul shudders to think of this,"

* 2 Thess. ii. 9.

i.e. of our LORD'S faculties being submitted to a spiritual delusion; "but do not shudder; for the greater the injury of the tempter, the more glorious the patience of the Victor." But is not this to exalt the patience of CHRIST at the expense of His Perfection? If even from bodily ailments our LORD was exempted, because they were thought to detract from His Perfection, surely to admit that He yielded for a moment His eye or His imagination to an untrue use, under the control of Satan when tempting Him, is to draw dangerously near to one of those limits which in the fourth lecture were set about this Mystery. That Satan should have taken our LORD to a high mountain, in order that He might see the country far and wide, would be wholly unnecessary, if the third Temptation was to be effected by some visionary deception.

With regard to the second explanation, which is, that GOD miraculously represented the glories of the world to CHRIST, such an interpretation is contrary to the statements of Scripture; for both in S. Matthew and S. Luke's Gospels Satan is described as showing the kingdoms to CHRIST. If GOD is the agent

in the third Temptation, we may regard Him as the agent throughout the whole transaction, as a writer in the last century did, who (though believing in the existence of Satan) considered the Spirit of GOD as "the immediate and sole author" of the Temptation.

The third explanation, which has the best authority of antiquity, is the one we would follow, as most consistent with the perfectness of CHRIST; which is, that He saw a magnificent view from the Mount, and that Satan with marvellous swiftness represented the different kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them, as in different directions CHRIST gazed—across the plains of Jericho—to Olivet—to the mountains of Arabia, even it may be—to the rim of the Mediterranean Sea. Though the view was limited, the *thought* of CHRIST stretched across the boundaries of the horizon; across, too, the ages past and the ages yet to come, and took in in one glance the measure of all earthly greatness, so that in one sense the language of the Evangelist is only adequate to the truth.

Those who would convict the Evangelist of an absurdity in supposing that all the world could be seen from a mountain, and would

attribute such a statement to his ignorance of the earth's spherical form—as though any one could conceive that a view of the whole earth would be possible if the earth *were* a flat surface—forget that in Holy Scripture there are statements which are hyperbolical. The Evangelist employs as to the range of CHRIST'S vision the same figure of speech as S. John uses in the last verse of his Gospel, where he says, that if "the other things which JESUS did should be written, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written." In the Old Testament, the HOLY SPIRIT resorts to the same mode of amplification: thus, to Abraham the LORD says, "Lift up thine eyes, and look from the place thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: for all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever. And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered."* It is not, then, by contracting the meaning of the word "world" so as to restrict it to Canaan;—for still it would

* Gen. xiii. 14-16.

not be in its literal sense true that CHRIST with His bodily eyes saw the whole of Canaan; and the use of different words for "the world" in the two Gospels of S. Matthew and S. Luke (the one large enough to embrace the whole order of created things, the other including the civilised world) forbids this mode of dealing with the inspired record;—but it is by explaining the passage, as S. Augustine explains the promise which we have just quoted, that the difficulty is removed. He says, speaking of the expression "thy seed shall be as the *dust*, innumerable," "This is a figure of speech, when that which is said is more than that which is signified; for who does not see how incomparably greater in number are the grains of sand or dust, not only than the seed of Abraham, but than the whole of mankind, from Adam to the end of the world?" And then he adds: "What is innumerable to man is numerable to GOD." Thus the description of the scene on the mountain top was in the letter an exaggeration of the event as far as Satan was concerned, but a reality to our LORD; the panorama was to Him co-extensive with the expressions used—"all the kingdoms of the

world, and the glory of them;" and so transient that glory, that to the Eternal One it passed before Him "in a moment of time."

The place of this Temptation, the sense which was the medium of it, the manner in which the objects were presented to CHRIST'S gaze and imagination, have now been considered. Our next step is to consider the offer which Satan made, and the condition he attached to its acceptance.

II. We must notice in order, the altered form of this temptation; the passion appealed to; the truth of the offer; and the condition which accompanied it.

(1.) Satan did not on the third occasion preface his assault with the expression of doubt or flattery—"If thou be the SON of GOD." This omission may be accounted for in two ways: either Satan felt the incongruity of such a form of address, when the condition which he proposed was such an execrable act as the adoration of himself; or, he left out those words because he no longer explored CHRIST'S Divinity. Some, and amongst them is S. Jerome, have believed that the three temptations, notwithstanding this difference, had the

same object in view—the discovery of CHRIST'S Divinity: others have, on the contrary, separated the third temptation, as to Satan's motive, from the other two. We would adopt the latter opinion. It seems a far-fetched interpretation, which brings the third temptation into harmony with the rest, by supposing that Satan suggested an act of idolatry in the hope that it would provoke CHRIST to say, "I ought to be adored by you, and are you so mad as to seek to be adored by me?" But to say that Satan had now begun to work upon a lower level, and to imagine that, as CHRIST had not wrought either of the miracles which he had proposed, he would now try Him as a mere creature, is more consistent with the narrative. Satan no longer seeks a miracle at CHRIST'S hands; therefore he no longer introduces the Temptation with "If thou be the SON of GOD." If CHRIST had been only a creature, He might have acted as He had acted, not from virtue, but from powerlessness. It would be no temptation to a creature to turn stones into bread, or to cast himself from the top of the Temple; these were only temptations to Him in whom Divine Power resided, and who *might*

have performed those acts, and when their performance involved certain truths and issues. Satan, then,—blind to virtue,—disbelieving in powers which are not ostentatiously displayed, though with a consciousness that he had been overthrown and that the armour in which he trusted was being taken from him, yet dares as a last chance to tempt CHRIST as a creature, and to search, not for Divinity, but for the seeds of corruption in His Soul.

(2.) Satan makes the offer, "All these things will I give thee." Here is the temptation addressed to the covetousness of the human heart. He appeals to a passion, a passion at once most powerful and most base—"the immoderate love of possessing." As hope of future blessings is in a special sense the virtue which from our condition we should cultivate (as we noticed in the beginning of this lecture), so the sin of covetousness, which is opposite to it, is man's special temptation. To sacrifice the invisible for the visible, the future for the present, the eternal for the temporal, Heaven for earth, is *our* sin. To sin in pride, says S. Bernard, is to sin with angels; to sin in sensuality, is to sin with 'the beasts that perish;' but to sin

in covetousness, is to sin with man's own sin. So vast is the power of this passion that S. Paul calls it "the root of all evil,"* because in its successive stages of getting, having, and enjoying, it ministers to, foments, and excites all the irregular desires. This 'lust of having' is the lowest point to which the love which has been withdrawn from its proper Object descends. Pride finds a resting-place in spiritual or personal excellence; sensuality descends to a lower step, and finds a resting-place in bodily indulgence; but covetousness grovels in the dust, and rests only in that which is external to and no part of our being. Thus the sin of covetousness is identified with "idolatry," both by CHRIST and by S. Paul. CHRIST describes the worship of "mammon,"† or of GOD, as the soul's alternative; and S. Paul says directly, "Covetousness, which is idolatry."‡ Not, of course, that covetousness is the same as idolatry, but it has a certain likeness to it; in that the avaricious man offers his love to an external object, immoderately desires it, and makes it it his chief thought and end.

* 1 Tim. vi. 10. † S. Matt. vi. 24.
‡ Col. iii. 5; Eph. v, 5.

Covetousness occupies a middle position between sensuality and pride (as we noticed when we were considering the order of the temptations), and has something in common with both. If we view it in reference to the soul, it is a spiritual sin, because it is completed in spiritual delight, and not in bodily gratification; but if we regard it in relation to its object, the delight, though spiritual, centres in material things, and thus it is not purely a spiritual sin. This hybrid nature, whilst it gives to the sin vast scope, also contributes to its moral deformity: it is like those mixed races which sometimes hang upon the borders of colonial settlements, and often manage to contract the vices of both peoples, and to imitate the virtues of neither. Covetousness has this in common with pride, that it is a spiritual sin in its subject, and so brings sin near to GOD; and it has this in common with sensuality, that its delight springs from a material object: yet it lacks that entire spirituality of the craving, which deprives the former of a certain turpitude; and it lacks the violent impulse of the latter, which supplies it with a measure of excuse.

The baseness of this passion was too patent

to escape the observation of philosophers, who, without the aid of Revelation, could read its nature and paint it in its true light. They placed covetousness further from 'the mean' of liberality than its opposite extreme, prodigality, because by the former no one was benefited, but the springs of Divine beneficence were interrupted which should have passed on to others; whereas by the latter, others were benefited through the excessive expenditure of the prodigal to the final injury of himself; and because prodigality was cured by age, and by exhausted resources, whilst covetousness in age became incurable, and by resources was never satisfied. Revelation did not, as in some instances, adjust the teaching of nature, but confirmed and heightened it, by exposing to view the effects of covetousness—hardness of heart, violence, perjury, lying, fraud, betrayal, as illustrated in the conduct of the Rich Man, Ahab, Gehazi, Ananias, Achan, and Judas; and by pouring upon this vice the severest denunciations which can be found in the pages of Holy Scripture. It was upon this passion, so vile and so powerful,—which found its culminating expression in the sin of Deicide—that

Satan made his last attempt—"All these things will I give thee."

It was an appeal to a passion on a magnificent scale. If passions are excited in proportion to the greatness of their objects—great love by great beauty, great hatred by great injury, great regret by great loss—then, surely here the 'lust of having' will be stimulated in no ordinary degree. The truth of this offer must now become our enquiry.

(3.) The first and second Temptations could have been suggested by any one; but the third, to be a temptation at all, could have been framed only by some one who possessed, or seemed to possess, extensive powers. It has been supposed that Satan transformed himself into an angel of light, when he tempted CHRIST on the Mountain, in order that the outward majesty of his person might attest the truth of the offer which he made. The reality of this temptation rests upon the reality in some sense of the offer. There are here two extreme opinions which must be avoided: the one, that Satan had actual possession of the world as an independent Ruler; the other, that the proposal, emanating from the father of lies, had

not a shadow of truth about it. To maintain that Satan had acquired no power over mankind through the Fall, is to take a position which is counter to the plain assertions of Holy Scripture, and to the universal belief of the Church for more than a thousand years of its existence. Antagonism can only be continued where power exists on both sides; and the prophecy which announced the conflict between the serpent and the woman, was a witness to a power the Fall had just placed into the hands of Satan. Our LORD'S work was to destroy that power. We must here quote again those texts which we referred to in treating of Satan's power. CHRIST came, "that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil"*—He "was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil"†—Our LORD calls the Devil "the prince of this world"—He speaks of casting out the prince of this world. S. Paul uses stronger language, and calls Satan "the god of this world."‡ CHRIST comes to establish His Reign, and to displace Satan. Nothing can be

* Heb. ii. 14. † 1 S. John iii. 8.
‡ 2 Cor. iv. 4.

clearer than our LORD'S account of this displacement: "When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace: but when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusted."* That Satan had acquired a power over the world, then, is evidently the doctrine of Holy Scripture; and early writers of great authority in the Church went so far as to suppose that this power was in some sense a just one, on the principle which S. Paul asserts in his Epistle to the Romans—"Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?"† Some thought that CHRIST'S ransom was a payment to Satan to free us from captivity; without appropriating this confusion of thought between the *effect* and *direction* of CHRIST'S Oblation of Himself, we may gather from it how strongly the idea of Satan's power had possessed their minds.

Satan then offered to resign this power, whatever it was, into CHRIST'S hands, so that He

* S. Luke xi. 21. † Rom. vi. 16.

should reign as then Satan reigned. We admit that by the language in which this temptation is couched, the element of truth in the offer is overlaid with exaggeration and empty boast; for, according to S. Luke, Satan not only offers the kingdoms, and the glory of them, but adds, "for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it;"* yet we maintain that what Satan promised he had in some real sense the *power* of fulfilling, by withdrawing those agencies of evil which, through the chains of original sin, and by direct action on the evil inclinations of corrupt nature, had held man in bondage. Our LORD declared concerning Himself, "The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me;" *i.e.* could find in Him no trace of original sin, as in others, by which to enthral Him.

Satan's power over the soul was not confined to the earth, but extended in some way into the middle state, to the "spirits in prison,"† to whom CHRIST went in order to apply the Merits of His Death. There, too, CHRIST is represented as triumphing over Satan, and taking that power of detention from him which he seems to have

* S. Luke iv. 6. † 1 Peter iii. 19.

possessed. CHRIST "led captivity captive,"* "triumphed over powers and principalities,"† carrying the victory of His Cross into the realms of the dead, breaking "the gates of brass"‡ and the bars of iron in sunder, and by the Blood of the Covenant sending forth the prisoners out of the pit.§ The treacherous offer of Satan then suggested the yielding up of a power which he exerted over the kingdoms of the world—a power which under the Providence of GOD, through the Fall, and the consequent corruption of human nature, he had acquired.

(4.) But the condition under which the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them were offered to CHRIST, is altogether unlike the rest of the Mystery of the Temptation. As Satan could not draw CHRIST to perform actions which would testify to His Greatness and Divinity, now he suggests an act which was to witness to his own greatness; an act, too, which involved the grossest violation of the Moral Law: "All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me." The

* Eph. iv. 8. † Col. ii. 15.
‡ Ps. cvii. 16. § Zech. ix. 11.

offering to a creature the worship which is due to GOD Alone is the greatest sin that can be committed, except when it is the result of inculpable ignorance; and that act of idolatry which Satan required was the worst form of the sin, in that the Enemy of GOD proposed himself as the object of that worship. Satan no longer deals with insinuations or flatteries, but manifests himself as GOD'S rival—manifesting at once by this condition his hatred of GOD, and his thirst for Divine Excellency. Multitudes have acceded to his proposal, and actually worship him as their god—some where the name of GOD is not known; and where he has not been able to carry out his whole design of directing sacrifice, worship, and adoration towards his own person, he has succeeded so far as to be able to draw away from GOD that worship which is His due, and to transfer it to other persons or objects; or, if not this, to corrupt the worship of GOD. And now he trusted to the enchantment of that view from the mountain top, to the fascination which the beauties of nature possess, to the glories of the world which he had depicted, to the transfer of dominion which he promised, to man's love of

wealth, power, beauty, pleasure, and earthly greatness, to draw away the heart of JESUS—of Him, Who had led a life of poverty, obscurity, and toil as a villager in Nazareth.

Thus the different features of this temptation—the absence of an appeal to CHRIST'S Divinity, the passion addressed, what truth and what falsehood the offer contained, and the blasphemous price at which the world's glory was to be purchased—have been surveyed. It remains for us to discover how this could have been in any sense a real temptation to CHRIST.

III. Doubtless, the question will have again and again presented itself, 'How will this temptation bear the interpretation which has been applied to the other two?' That such an object should have tempted *us* would not have been surprising, because of that evil which resides in our nature, which renders us liable to fall under the seductions of the world. That so vast an offer should have stirred in us such a mighty ambition as would render us deaf to all moral considerations, is conceivable, when we take into account our thirst for greatness, and our lack of it. But with the pure and perfect

CHRIST, to whom the glories of Heaven were familiar, and by whom the worlds were made, how could the offer present an object which would produce in Him excitement of desire—a desire which His Will had to quell, and in which struggle the essence of a temptation is once again to be found? It may be predicted that the principle of interpretation which has proved good to us thus far, must now be forsaken, and the mode of explaining the temptation, as not only an outward solicitation, but also an inward trial, be given up. Be it, it may be said, that such an interpretation was possible in the first temptation, possible, though in a less degree, in the second, yet it cannot be applied to the third.

Now the increasing difficulty of its application may be admitted, and its cause discovered. The difficulty of interpretation heightens as Mysteries themselves deepen. First, it must be borne in mind that the Temptation is a Mystery, and therefore is not, it has been said, to be solved as a mathematical problem. A Mystery is that which we may look into, examine, approach from different stand-points; but after all, it is that which we cannot see

through, and that which has bearings which we cannot harmonise. And then, it must be remembered also, that Mysteries deepen as they advance through their different stages or acts. Thus in the Passion we come at last to the cry of desolation, "My GOD, my GOD, why hast thou forsaken me?"* and as the Mystery advances, the interior Sufferings more and more transcend the limits of human reason.

It is evident that the Temptations are in the ascending scale: the mildest and furthest from any violation of the Moral Law stands first; the second is a little nearer the margin, because the proposal in the case of a creature would involve the sacrifice of human life, unless carried out with a previous guarantee of Divine protection, but the act would not be in itself positively sinful when the power of averting its disastrous consequences existed; but the condition of the third temptation is positively sinful, nay, it involved a sin of the darkest dye. The temptations, then, being in this sense in the ascending scale, it follows that the difficulty of regarding them as real inward struggles to CHRIST proportionately increases.

* S. Matt. xxvii. 46.

The third temptation is a more daring, I may say, a more desperate attack; and as the temptation was more apparent, so CHRIST at last openly addresses Satan by name. It was the climax on both sides; and what in Satan may have been regarded as the climax of daring, in CHRIST became the climax of moral and spiritual power. He tempts CHRIST no longer as GOD, but as an Adventurer, who would therefore seek to gain power and dominion.

Even if the interpretation of an inward struggle could not be maintained in the third temptation, it may yet be valid in the other two; for it may be said that the two former temptations were constructed so as to befit the SON of GOD, and were so contrived as to keep clear of any implication of the Moral Law,—Satan knowing that an enticement to *evil* in the case of CHRIST would be fruitless; but that in the third temptation, having given up the doubt about CHRIST'S Divinity, and approaching Him only as a creature, he devised a weapon of a more gross and deadly character, and that therefore from its inappropriateness he signally failed in producing

that inward tension of CHRIST'S Human Soul, which he had succeeded in exciting when his temptations had been framed with a view to His possible Divinity. Yet to surrender a mode of interpretation in the midst of a Mystery must certainly weaken its previous application, and in this case seriously impair the object which we have in view; namely, to prove that CHRIST has derived sympathy with us in all forms of temptation from an actual experience of temptation Himself. We have seen Him tempted as to bodily cravings, tempted as to mental cravings, now we must extend His sympathy to the temptations which belong to the region of the soul; in each side of our being, body, soul, and spirit; in each realm of temptation, 'the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, the pride of life,' must JESUS experience temptation, that the Apostle's statement may be verified, "He was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin."*

We must be careful not to confound the temptation with the condition which was annexed to it. The condition our LORD could only view with intense abhorrence, whilst the

* Heb. iv. 15.

temptation presented attractions. The temptation was not to idolatry, but to the possession of the kingdoms of the world. Thus in the first temptation, the idea which excited desire was not the working of a miracle, but the satisfying of the cravings of the body; in the second temptation, the idea which excited desire was not the miraculous flight through the air from the Temple roof to the courts below, but the result of the miracle in revealing to His own people the Divinity in a manner calculated to carry with it irresistible conviction; so now the temptation does not consist in the idolatrous act which was proposed, and which was abhorred, but in certain ideas which the present possession of the world and its glory suggested.

The great difference between the act here proposed and the miracles which were solicited in the first and second temptations is, that in the former cases a positive law only was concerned; whereas in the third the barrier which is raised is not a simple indication of GOD'S Will, for the time being, known only to the mind of CHRIST, but the first commandment of the Moral Law. In the two first temptations the waves of desire rolled against, so to speak, a temporary break-

water; but in the third the solid rock hinders even their fall. But this is to view the matter objectively; for the Will of the Father was as much to CHRIST the Law of His Life as the Moral Law is to us. To Him in one sense both were equally binding: "I delight to do Thy Will, O my GOD: yea, Thy Law is within my heart."* The Will of the Father, and the cravings of pure human nature, and the sacrifice of those cravings to the Divine Purpose, constituted in CHRIST that struggle; which, the Moral Law, our fallen inclinations, and the sacrifice of the latter to the former, occasion in us. The Will of His Father was, so to speak, His Moral Law, by which His Life was moulded, and His conduct ruled, every expression of which was His joy and secret food; so that, subjectively, it was all the same, whether an intimation of the Father's Will or a Moral Law formed the embankment as far as obedience was concerned. There was this distinction, that the Moral Evil in the latter case would render the act detestable, so that the desires of a pure nature could not set in that direction; whilst in the former the act itself, which was connected with the Temptation,

* Ps. xl. 8.

might form a part of it. An act of idolatry could no more appeal to a sinless nature than a temptation to lust could find a response in the nature of the pure and blessed Spirits, yet the *offer* of Satan had its aspects of allurement.

The impossibility of complying with the condition would not of necessity quench desires for the object which was offered. Desire differs from hope in this respect amongst others; namely, that you may desire that which at the time presents no possibility of attainment. Hope, on the contrary, must include possibility of attainment, as one condition of its object; you may therefore desire that for which you cannot entertain hope. S. Thomas certainly desired above all things to see CHRIST again, yet he had no hope of doing so; the dying man may desire a fresh lease of life, but be conscious that the hour of hope is past; or, what is more to the point, Moses from the top of Pisgah desired to enter the fair land which was spread out before his gaze, but knew there was no hope of setting his foot upon it. Our LORD, in the garden of Gethsemane, desired that the cup might pass from Him, but He did not hope that the cup might pass from Him:

whilst desire had cried, "Father, save me from this hour,"* He rectified desire by adding, "but for this cause came I unto this hour." Desires, then, will arise, irrespective of the impossibility of their gratification.

In three ways desires might be stirred in the Heart of CHRIST, by this offering of the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them.

The tendency to pride, sensuality, and avarice in fallen human nature, needed some tremendous antidote to correct it; that antidote was supplied by the conditions of our LORD'S life. He led a life of lowliness, suffering, and poverty, so as to reverse the maxims of the world and to arrest the course of irregular desires. Our LORD then laid aside His greatness and became poor. S. Paul says of His Divine Greatness, He "emptied Himself;" that is, not of its possession, but of its use. But not only did CHRIST lay aside His Divine Greatness, but human greatness, as men judge greatness, He did not assume. "He became poor,"† and in His birth and circumstances of life took the position of a labouring man. Now, the one thing which first hindered the Jews from believing

* S. John xii. 27. † 2 Cor. viii. 9.

in Him was this external meanness of condition. He chose poverty at a great cost; that cost was His rejection by His fellow-countrymen—"He came unto His own, and His own received Him not."* They fixed their eyes on the prophecies which foretold the glorious condition of the Messiah; they would rather admit that there were two CHRISTS than two Advents of the One CHRIST. They expected that CHRIST would come with temporal greatness, riches, honour, and power, to deliver them from a foreign yoke; and unless He had those accompaniments they would not receive Him. What Satan offered corresponded with the description of the Son of Man in the book of Daniel: "There was given Him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve Him."† Our LORD, then, might be tempted to desire, when the suggestion was made, and the imagination kindled by the beauties of the land of His birth, that it might be possible to exchange His condition, and to be visibly invested with that power and dominion which as GOD He latently possessed, that thereby the way might be smoothed for His reception by

* S. John i. 11. † Dan. vii. 14.

Israel; and that, as through the material be led to the spiritual in His works of healing, so through His outward splendour He might lead His people to some apprehension of His True Greatness. But this could not be: for as a Victim He had one set of prophecies to fulfil before another set would be entered upon; and as an Example, He had to supply a Law of Perfection, by a life of poverty, obedience, and mortification.

Such a desire would be natural to man, and innocent in itself. The best and noblest minds have desired honour, wealth, dominion, not for self-aggrandizement, but for the benefit which would arise to others from their possession and legitimate use; and the third temptation was calculated to call such a desire into play in the Man CHRIST JESUS. And this desire must have oftentimes been stirred, though in a lesser degree, when CHRIST'S low estate was brought forward as a reason for rejecting Him; as, for instance, when He was at Nazareth, and they said in contempt, "Is not this Joseph's son?"* or again, "Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary? . . . and they were offended at him;"† or

* S. Luke iv. 22. † S. Mark vi. 3.

again, when "they proposed taking Him by force, and making Him a king."‡ In this, as in the other temptations, we have presignifications of those temptations which would form a part of the trials of His Public Ministry, and which perhaps in some measure had already been felt in the hidden life at Nazareth.

But besides the idea of satisfying the expectations of His own people, a deeper and wider thought would underlie this offer of the kingdoms. The offer was nothing less than to part with that mysterious power which Satan had gained through the Fall. Surely, if anything could create an intense longing on the part of CHRIST, such a thought as this would do so. One of old described Satan as showing to our LORD the way he held mankind in his grasp—how he reigned in some through pride; in others, through lust; in others, through covetousness; in others, through anger; in others, through gluttony; in others, through envy; in others, through sloth;—these were the different chains by which he held his captives in bondage;—and then exciting intense desire in CHRIST by suggesting how in turn He should reign

‡ S. John vi. 15.

by lowliness, love, purity, meekness, and the like. To reign in the hearts of men by virtues, in whom Satan now held dominion by vices; to have at once a world-wide rule, instead of that partial success, that weary conflict, that distant and gradual victory which was foretold, when the kingdoms of this world should "become the kingdoms of our LORD and of His CHRIST," * must have stirred desire in Him who could read the future, and see all that must come to pass before that universal sway could be realised, "when He shall have put down all rule and all authority and power." †

Another desire certainly must have been excited,—a desire which CHRIST manifested in words at another time; namely, the desire to reign, but to be spared the Passion; to establish His Kingdom, but to escape the Cross,—the Cross in all its forms, but especially in its final Form. S. Peter was the mouth-piece of a similar temptation afterwards. When CHRIST announced His Passion, S. Peter said, "Far be it from thee, Lord;" ‡ and the vehemence of CHRIST'S reply showed at once how keenly the

* Rev. xi. 15. † 1 Cor. xv. 24.
‡ S. Matt. xvi. 22.

suggestion touched Him, and the quarter from which it came. Bear in mind that our LORD foresaw all; minutely and fixedly were the events of the Passion before Him; and the power which was to be His as man, was in the Divine Predestination to be gained anew through the Passion. In His Resurrection the power, now falsely offered, was then given—"All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." * The kingdom of the Incarnation was to be established, but only 'through His Cross and Passion.' His Human Nature (or He would not have been true man) shrank from that future of suffering—"Father, save me from this hour." And not only did He foresee His own woes—Gethsemane, the Scourging, the Laceration, the Thorn-crown, the Crucifixion, but He saw the sorrows of others—His Blessed Mother at the foot of the Tree, His disciples deserting Him, one denying Him, one betraying Him, and the scandal of His Cross both to Jew and Gentile; and thus surely the idea of reigning, as He would have reigned had the Fall not connected the Incarnation with the Passion, would awaken in the Heart of CHRIST an intense desire.

* S. Matt. xxviii. 18.

But these desires could not be gratified; for the Divine Will had pre-arranged the conditions of CHRIST'S Human Life, the abiding conflict between good and evil, and the means and measure of Final Conquest.

We trace, then, in the third temptation the elements of a genuine struggle—desire, law, conflict between the two, external suggestion, and free-will. The Will of CHRIST did not for one moment swerve from the Divine Purpose; and, whilst on the one side, it held down the desires which struggled for the mastery, on the other, it held firm to the path of Righteousness; conquered, that is, the temptation; so that CHRIST could afterwards animate His disciples with the triumphant announcement—"Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."*

We have, then, endeavoured to show in what way the third temptation could be a real temptation to JESUS CHRIST. By it He extends His sympathy to the sphere of covetousness. All those temptations which spring from 'the desire of having;' from love of power, honour, or wealth; from ambition, or dread of pain; from attractions of the world and temporal interests;

* S. John xvi. 33.

from the love, in short, of the visible and present, come within the area of this Temptation. As we have said before, in a corrupt nature a different motive may stir the passion from that which can find a place in the Sinless Nature of CHRIST: in us, 'the desire of having' may be prompted by selfish rather than generous motives; but in Him it existed without any irregularity or corruptness, and demanded the same repression,—a repression more difficult when the desire is innocent in itself,—as we have to exert, when "the love of having," or the desire of avoiding pain, besets us. As long as we are *tempted*, and do not fall, we are within the range of the sympathy of CHRIST. The struggle is the same, however different the motives may be. There is a desire, and it has to be quenched; and whether the desire be the thirst of a pure nature, or of a fevered condition, not to gratify it in both cases involves struggle and suffering. Though "the earth is the LORD'S, and the fulness thereof,"* yet that LORD placed Himself in circumstances of need, so that whilst on earth He might view the external world from the creature's stand-

* Ps. xxiv. 1.

point, and be enabled to sympathise with the cravings of Humanity. This sympathy of CHRIST will be the stay and comfort of those who are tempted in the sphere of covetousness.

But on the other hand, this Temptation is a warning against worldliness. It teaches us how Satan uses the world as one of his instruments of enticement, and one which he trusts in, when other weapons have failed. As it is the third Temptation, so, in the parable of the sower, the third instance of unprofitable sowing is that of the one who "received seed among the thorns," and who "heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, that it becometh unfruitful."* And Satan paints the glories of the world, but hides its miseries, when he would enchant the soul and draw it away from GOD. It is now, as of old, he makes Israel remember the gratifications of Egypt, and not the hardships of their bondage. That wide temptation, 'the world,' which causes us to make every visible object to become, instead of a help, a distinct hindrance towards reaching the end of our being; that temptation

* Matt. xiii. 22.

which turns at last the instinct of worship from the Creator to the creature; that temptation which hardens the heart until it becomes incapable of receiving impressions of divine grace; that temptation which barters the pleasures of Heaven for the glory which passes away "in a moment of time," is the last most powerful engine which the Devil employs to ensnare the soul. As the Life of CHRIST, so the maxims of CHRIST are in direct opposition to the spirit and principles of the world, and hence there can be no coalition between real Christianity and worldliness. "The friendship of the world is enmity with GOD."* The great lesson, then, of this Temptation is to 'use this world as not abusing it,' and to remember how transient, doubtful of realisation, and unsatisfying when obtained, are its joys; "for the fashion of this world passeth away."†

We may venture too, even with regard to the condition which Satan proposed, namely, that CHRIST should fall down and worship him, to draw good out of evil. That Satan should have dared to suggest such an act to CHRIST, may prevent those who are troubled with

* S. James iv. 4. † 1 Cor. vii. 31.

blasphemous and other horrid thoughts, from falling into despair. Some thoughts are rather vexations than temptations of the soul, and molest it without having any side of attraction. They are simply abhorred, whether they come as a flash, or are of long continuance. These thoughts oftentimes come in prayer, and may tempt us to desist from praying, in order to avoid them; and then, from the doubt whether they are altogether involuntary, or arise from some fault in ourselves, they may lead the soul to despondency. In such trials, then, as these, we may rest in the thought of the suffering of JESUS, and of the meekness with which He rejected the Tempter's hateful proposal on the mountain top; and may trust to His sympathy and the grace He purchased, when we are haunted with visions and voices which sound and terrify, but, in that they are hated, do not leave any stain on, the conscience.

This Temptation, then, is provided with its "credentials of utility," if from it the sympathy of CHRIST reaches out to the remaining third of our own struggles; if from it, too, we discern the tactics of the enemy, and thus are put on our guard against the love of the world; and

if by it we are fortified against depression, when molested by evil thoughts; and finally, if from considering it we make a fresh effort to set our affections on things above, and to obey, in will and deed, that precept which CHRIST in repelling the temptation re-asserted—"Thou shalt worship the LORD thy GOD, and Him only shalt thou serve."

LECTURE VII.

The End of the Temptation.

"*Then the devil leaveth Him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto Him.*"—MATT. iv. 11.

IN this Victory we see a partial fulfilment of the ancient prophecy, the prophecy which was graciously vouchsafed to man to sustain his hopes, when he has just forfeited his first estate —"I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."* It was a triple announcement: it contained the promise of a second Eve, who should reverse the conduct of the first, and for whom, therefore, the Spirit of Evil should entertain the deadliest hatred: "I will put enmity between thee and the woman." This is the first antagonism. Then the second element of this prediction extended the antagonism: "And

* Gen. iii. 15.

between thy seed and her seed." We cannot but think that the modern interpretation is a true one, which finds in the following words a mystic representation of the fulfilment of this ancient prophecy—"There appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars;" and when she had brought forth her child, a "dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads . . . . stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born."* The objection which is sometimes made, that the context does not harmonise with such an interpretation, may be raised against many of those prophecies which are universally accepted. The fact is, that prophecies and descriptions which occur in Holy Scripture are oftentimes like sudden flashes of light and transfigurations which do not emit their radiance beyond the text; and as we sometimes behold the moon passing from one cloud only to be again enveloped by another, so these gleams of heavenly truth shine out for a moment, and then are hidden beneath the

* Rev. xii. 1-5.

history or allegory. Satan's enmity was prophetically against 'the woman,' who by her faith, obedience, and self-surrender, prepared the way for his final overthrow; and then against her seed—that is, CHRIST and His members; for the word 'seed' may be taken both in a singular and plural sense. But the third element of the prediction is the one with which we are in our concluding lecture especially concerned. Not only was antagonism foretold, but relative victory: "It shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."* The victory was not to be gained by the simple putting forth of superior power, but by a genuine struggle, in which wounds would be exchanged, but the vulnerable part would be different; in the one the heel, in the other the head, would be the member to suffer.

Now it may be said that this struggle and victory referred to the Cross, and not to the Temptation; that upon the Tree the Sacred Humanity was wounded, and the power of Satan overthrown; but the prediction, we may believe, had reference also to the struggle in the wilderness, on the pinnacle of the Temple, and on

* Gen. iii. 15.

the mountain. In the Mystery of Temptation there was an *active* struggle with the Evil One, in which the heel of CHRIST—His Humanity, was bruised; that is, suffered all the pain, tension, and smart which successive blows of temptation inflicted on his sinless and therefore sensitive Being, and in which, by His victorious resistance, the Tempter really received a deadly wound. One of old* regarded this victory in the Temptation as the payment which was equivalent to the debt of our disobedience: "CHRIST, conquering 'Satan,' cast him from Him as one legitimately overthrown; and so the breaking of a precept by Adam was compensated by the keeping of a precept by the Son of Man." Without going the whole length of this assertion, we may soberly believe that there was a real weakening of Satanic power by the Victory in the wilderness, and that that Victory was a vantage-ground from which all future conflicts would be fought with a new force against the Enemy,—that to it the promise looked back as well as to the Cross: "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set

* St. Irenæus.

down with my Father in His throne."* One thing which must be borne in mind, the prophecy to which we have alluded clearly states, that it is the *seed* of the woman by whom the serpent's head is to be bruised. It was not therefore the woman herself—the Virgin Mary, neither was it the Divinity, but the Manhood of CHRIST which bruised the serpent's head. As man was overcome by Satan, so now Man overcame; it was "not by power," that is, Divine Power, "but by justice," the enemy was vanquished. First, let us notice the cause of Satan's departure; secondly, the limit of it; and thirdly, what followed it.

I. S. Matthew says, as he closes the account of the Temptation, "Then the devil leaveth him." S. Luke rather more fully relates the termination of the Mystery: "And when the devil had ended all the temptation, he departed from Him for a season."†

These statements imply that Satan's presence had been hitherto continuous, and that the temptations had taken place without any pause between them, save that which change of place occasioned; and the question which naturally

* Rev. iii. 21. † S. Luke iv. 13.

arises is, "Why did Satan leave CHRIST immediately after the third temptation?" The point of interest in this question is this:—'Did Satan withdraw of his own accord, or was he obliged to depart from CHRIST at that time?' Perhaps the combination of both these modes of accounting for his departure is necessary to express the entire truth. Let us consider them both: the one is to view Satan's departure on the side of CHRIST; the other, to regard it as his own voluntary act.

(1.) CHRIST had repelled Satan in the third temptation in a way quite different from that which He employed in the previous contests. Indeed, it may be truly said that it was only in the third temptation our LORD used words of repulse at all. On the other occasions, He had contented Himself with a quotation from Holy Scripture, which met and corrected Satan's proposals; but in the third temptation, he adds words of His own, "Get thee hence, Satan."

In the parallel passage of S. Luke, it will be seen that the Evangelist represents CHRIST as saying, "Get thee behind me, Satan;"* but the words are most probably an interpolation,

* S. Luke iv. 8.

S. Luke having omitted the expression of repulse, because, as he was not recording the Temptations in their historic order, the repulse would have no meaning when it was instantly followed by a fresh effort on the part of Satan. S. Jerome would not have contrasted our LORD's rebuke to Peter and His rejection of Satan, had the words been the same: he says—"The devil and Peter are not, as many suppose, condemned to the same sentence. To Peter it is, 'Get thee behind me, Satan,'* *i.e.* follow thou behind me who art contrary to my will. But here it is, 'Go, Satan,' and is not added 'behind me,' that we may understand, 'into the fire prepared for thee and thy angels.'" We may, then, quote S. Matthew exclusively as to this sentence of rejection; but even if S. Luke's words were to stand, in both cases there is a repulse, although in the latter one of less severity. The question, however, remains much the same as to its coercive effect upon Satan.

We may conclude, then, that Satan was forced to depart in obedience to CHRIST'S command, which put an end to the Temptation. "It was not in order to obey a precept that

* S. Mark xvi. 23.

he departed," says one of old, "but because the Divinity of CHRIST and the HOLY SPIRIT drove him away." This expulsive power of Deity was manifested again in some measure, when the traitor and his associates drew near to take CHRIST. S. John is careful to preserve the record to us of their sudden discomfiture at the first onset: "As soon then as He had said unto them, I am He, they went backward, and fell to the ground."* Both were portents, and faintly foreshadowed the awful rejection at the last day: "Depart from me, ye cursed."†

There is in the utterance, "Get thee hence, Satan," an evident vehemency and indignation, as well as a coercive dismissal. Let us see whether we can account for this change in our LORD'S demeanour, and then, what we may further learn from this enforced withdrawal.

Our LORD'S tone altered, we may believe, in consequence of the condition which Satan ventured to propose in the third temptation. In order to gain the world and its fleeting glories, Satan had dared to suggest to CHRIST a gross violation of the Moral Law. Hitherto, in Satan's enticements, the Moral Law, as we

* S. John xviii. 6. † S. Matt. xxv. 41.

have seen, had not been directly concerned, but only the Will of GOD, as that Will was secretly known to CHRIST. To ask for an act, which, though contrary to the Divine Will, was not in opposition to our moral sense, was altogether different from requiring an act which involved a downright transgression of the first Commandment. Our LORD, then, by repelling Satan with vehemency, revealed His intense hatred of sin, and especially of sin in which His Father's Honour was directly concerned. His conduct was like that of Moses, who was so incensed with the idolatry of Israel, that "his anger waxed hot, and he cast the tables out of his hands, and brake them beneath the mount."* The same zeal was manifested by our SAVIOUR in act when He expelled the buyers and sellers from the courts of the Temple because His Father's Honour was at stake. The warmth of His manner and action on that occasion surprised His disciples, until the words of the psalmist† came to them as an elucidation of this sudden change in CHRIST'S bearing. It was sin, or the bare suggestion of sin, against GOD, which

* Exod. xxxii. 19. † S. John ii. 17.

kindled the Wrath of the Lamb. There was evidently a peculiar sensitiveness, if we may so speak, in CHRIST, respecting those sins which were done *directly* against GOD.

Sins are classified in different ways. One common form, and a good one, of self-examination, divides sins into sins against GOD, sins against our neighbour, and sins against ourselves. By this mode of examination we traverse the whole area of our responsibilities; for our duties lie in those three directions. Now the sins which chiefly excited CHRIST'S anger are those which at present are least taken into account. It follows when belief in the Personality of GOD is openly impugned, that the discernment of those sins which are directly against Him should in a corresponding degree be impaired, and that sins should begin to be confined to offences, not against GOD, but against society. When we find that the highest reason which is given for not breaking the Moral Law is that such a course of conduct is injurious to society, and therefore ultimately injurious to the tenure of the life, health, or property of the individual transgressor, it behoves us to keep very steadily in view our

LORD'S estimate of sin; and it may, therefore, be well to pause for a moment in order to consider what is meant by sins directly against GOD, and in what their special malignity consists.

In one sense, all sin is sin against GOD, because it cannot be committed in any way without breaking the Divine Law, and therefore treating with contempt the Lawgiver; and in this sense the psalmist uttered the words, "Against thee only have I sinned,"* when he had broken several of the Commandments of the Second Table. He was so absorbed with the consciousness that he had offended GOD, that the creatures, who were the instruments and material of that violation, did not divert his attention from the One with whom he had to do. In another sense, sins against GOD are those which exceed the order of human reason, and in which GOD is exclusively concerned without any intervening object or creature. Thus, sins which involve diseases of the great organs of the spiritual life—faith, hope, and love, are sins directly against GOD. Unbelief, distrust, presumption, despair, hatred of GOD,

* Ps. li. 4.

irreverence, blasphemy, idolatry, and false worship, are sins of this class: whereas sins against justice and charity, as they affect our neighbour; and sins against temperance and chastity, as they affect ourselves, are sins indirectly and not directly against GOD. Sins against GOD have a special heinousness, and have not the excuse of the seductions of pleasure or of the impulses of passion in the same degree as other sins. They are a *direct* affront: and, as it is a higher offence to commit an assault on the person of the King than to insult him by ill-using his officers or injuring his people; so sins against GOD Himself have relatively a greater heinousness than those in which other objects or causes intervene between Him and the sinner. It will be found, that the age which ignores the sins in which GOD Alone is concerned will soon dismiss the rest. What is it which restrains the hand of the spoiler from the goods, or life, or virtue of another? It is not the mere thought of the inexpediency of the act, or of its detrimental effect on society; but the thought of a Personal GOD, a Just Judge, an irrevocable doom. No other thought can arrest the passion in its ascendancy save

that of the Holy One, from whose gaze we cannot escape. Godlessness and Revolution go together; and, on the other hand, belief in a Personal GOD and a Rewarder lies at the very base of the social fabric, and can alone uphold it in safety. It was, then, because Satan now attempted to touch the Moral Law, now attempted to dethrone GOD and to take His place as the object of adoration, that our LORD with holy anger repelled him: "Get thee hence, Satan."

The termination of the Temptation, regarded on CHRIST'S side, was brought about by this command to depart which Satan received, and by this a momentous truth is displayed. Our LORD'S Temptation is a revelation to us of the laws of our probation. CHRIST was tempted 'for our instruction.' This authoritative repulse is an evidence that the action of Satan in tempting is entirely under the control of GOD; that Satan has not passed out of the reach of GOD, and consequently that he cannot act as an independent agent,—as some rebellious son who, in leaving his father's home, throws off all parental restraints. The Dominion of Jurisdiction in GOD is of too wide a nature to admit of escape. That Dominion has various districts;

it administers commands and prohibitions; it permits, rewards, or punishes. That Dominion holds within its vast territory the highest creature in Heaven, and the one who is the deepest fallen in Hell. Creatures by sin or holiness may pass from one province of this Jurisdiction to another, but they must still remain within its grasp, and therefore Satan's movements are regulated by the Divine Permission. As in each trial of Job Satan had to gain a fresh permission, so the devils could not enter into the swine until CHRIST said "Go;"* and Satan could not continue his temptation, after CHRIST had ordered him to depart.

There are two forces which limit Satan's working—the Divine Will, and Divine Grace. The limit which the Divine Will assigns Him may be twofold; it may be a limit of power as to its intensity of exercise, a restriction which hinders Satan from putting forth his full strength; or, it may be also a limit as to the length of a temptation. It has been thought that Satan was allowed to put forth his full power against CHRIST, and only against CHRIST; but that in tempting the mere

* S. Matt. viii. 32.

creature, that power was always restricted. Permission of GOD is one force, and Divine grace is another, which has a controlling effect; because with each temptation there is to the soul a corresponding donation of grace, whereby it may be overcome, as those words declare which re-assured S. Paul of his safety when tormented with a humiliating temptation—"My grace is sufficient for thee;"* again, we have the distinct promise—"GOD is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able."† S. Peter was warned by CHRIST of his impending trial—"Simon, Simon, behold Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat;" but he was comforted also by the assurance of finally emerging from it—"but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren."‡ Whether Satan's power be repressed in himself, or by the bestowal of a counter-power in the soul of the tempted, in either case the result is the same—he is hindered from exerting that power in an overwhelming degree.

* 2 Cor. xii. 9. † 1 Cor. x. 13.
‡ S. Luke xxii. 31, 32.

This limit to temptation suggests two practical thoughts. The first is;—temptation is never strong enough to rid us of moral responsibility, and therefore can never be a sufficient excuse for sin. It is true that violent temptation has the effect of lessening the malice of sin, and that the sin of sheer wilfulness is of a darker dye than that which arises from the impetuosity of passion; yet, when all allowance has been made, some room for the play of the will is left in every unavoidable temptation. The second thought is;—the controlling Dominion of GOD supplies us with a ground of confidence in meeting the Evil One. An Uncreated and Sovereign Will is the Source of all good; a created and dependent will is the source of all evil. A ray of that power which CHRIST exercised in repelling the enemy is communicated to His members, who, through union with Him, can put forth an opposition which will have the same result—"Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."* CHRIST had borne the shock of temptation after temptation; but now the struggle was ended, and the foe driven from the field—"Let GOD arise, and let His enemies

* James iv. 7.

be scattered: let them also that hate Him flee before Him."*

(2.) Now we must look at Satan's departure from another point of view, which is an important one, for without it our LORD'S Victory might be disparaged. Satan withdrew not only from compulsion, but *willingly*. Be it that, had he willed, he could not have remained in the presence of CHRIST; yet, on the other hand, he readily yielded to that necessity which the powerful rebuff of CHRIST had laid upon him.

It is most important that we should regard Satan's departure, not only as the result of an Almighty fiat, but as the natural course which he would have taken who had been utterly discomfited. Satan had exhausted his temptations. There was nothing left for him to attack, or to which he might appeal in CHRIST. We have seen how in the third Temptation Satan left out the clause, "If thou be the SON of GOD," and had attached to the temptation a condition which was morally criminal, because he ventured to attack CHRIST as a mere creature. If the former temptations had been unsuccessful it was because CHRIST was only a man, and

* Ps. lxviii. 1.

those actions did not fall within the reach of a creature; now, thirdly, he had tempted CHRIST as a creature, and had been equally unsuccessful; therefore he had no longer any hope of drawing CHRIST from the path of righteousness. He falls at last into despair, as one of old remarks: "The LORD has two paths, mercy and truth; the evil spirits two paths, presumption and despair." Satan thus passes at the termination of his threefold attack from presumption to despair. He had searched for Divinity, he had searched for that proneness of uncorrupt creatures to pass beyond the boundaries of their finiteness, he had—if one may say so—searched for the seeds of corruption and the trail of his first overthrow, in the heart of CHRIST, and all had been in vain. The serpent's head has been by active opposition bruised, as hereafter upon the Cross it will be by passive endurance.

Satan has a multitude of temptations, legion in number and protean in form, yet they are all reducible to at least three inordinate desires in which self-love manifests itself. Temptations are like languages, which, though many, are divided into groups or families, and are

traceable to a few primitive sources. Temptations assume different shapes according to outward circumstances; but whatever may be the variation of type and expression, whether they are experienced by the savage or amid the refinements and complications of an advanced civilization, all temptations spring from the same inward causes—the pride, avarice, and sensuality of a corrupt nature. When these three causes have been tried, and tried in vain, nothing more remains to be tried. Thus S. Luke says, "The devil had ended *all* the temptation."* So again, S. John classifies all temptations under the three root-passions: "*All* that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the FATHER, but is of the world."† If the attack is made on the flesh, on the mind, and on the soul; if spirit and soul and body"‡ have been tested, the whole being has passed through an ordeal of probation. If we contemplate our first parents in the garden of Eden, or analyse the temptations of Israel in the desert, or our own temptations, we shall find that every tempta-

* S. Luke iv. 13. † 1 S. John ii. 16.
‡ 1 Thess. v. 23.

tion will be included in this threefold division. Satan departed then readily, because he had exhausted his resources.

The importance of this truth lies in the following considerations. If one great purpose of the Temptation, and the one with which we are most concerned, was to acquire a fresh basis of sympathy with the tempted, namely, that of actual experience, it was necessary that our LORD should be tempted in *all* points as we are, otherwise we should possess His sympathy in one region of temptation, and be beyond its reach in another. As CHRIST tasted death for every man, and thus each dying man—everywhere and at all times—can turn his glazed eyes in the hour of his agony to the Crucified, and say, "He tasted death for me;" so every tempted soul, whatever may be his struggle, can revert to the Mystery of the Temptation, nay, can look up to the Living CHRIST in His Glory, in whom is enshrined every experience of the past, and say, "He was tempted in all points as I am." Thus from an universal experience springs an universal compassion. CHRIST can enter into our temptations, not only through the knowledge and Love which are His as

GOD, but from a real fellowship with us in the mystery of Temptation.

Again, had the Tempter departed only in consequence of an irresistible repulse, and not also because in the successive defeats which he had suffered he had exhausted his temptations, and therefore "*all* his armour wherein he trusted" * had been taken from him, his taunt might have been this—"I should have been successful, but I was forcibly caused to desist from temptation, when this or that weapon had not been tried." If a nation, which had been conquered by another nation, had not been allowed to bring all their forces into the field, or to employ in the attack all their park of artillery, it is obvious that they might attribute their failure to the restriction which had been laid upon them. For the glory of CHRIST, then, as well as for the entirety of His sympathy, we must remember that the command to depart, which might have been at any time given, was not given until Satan had already ended *all* his temptation.

At the fitting moment CHRIST revealed His hatred of sin, His superiority of power, and His abhorrence of him who is the author of

* S. Luke xi. 22.

evil, by this vehement rejection of him from His presence. Satan had been repulsed before by many of GOD'S Saints, but never with that completeness and directness with which he was repulsed now. This utter overthrow was a new experience. Satan could feel in others how his temptations touched in their souls some cords which vibrated through the latent affinity with evil which was in them; he knew how, though unsuccessful in causing a fall, yet in one and in another he had ever found some approach to a coalition between the inward corruptness and the poison which he would fain inject; he knew how the hosts which were encamped around the city hoped for a triumph only when from their hiding-place in the fatal machine their allies would come forth and unbar the gates and let in the enemy; he knew how in other defeats the loss had been slight and quickly recovered, and had only affected individuals; but now the bruise touched a vital part; now the very foundations of his kingdom began to tremble.

Satan knew how this conflict in the desert, on the Temple, on the mountain, had ended in a Victory, although he had been permitted

to put forth all his strength in those condensed temptations; and that by this Victory, not only a personal advantage had been gained, but that the victory was of a representative character. It was not the Victory of *a* man, but of *the* Man; it was the reversal in a measure of Satan's gains in Eden. As the overthrow of man was representative, so, though in a higher sense, was the victory of Humanity in CHRIST. A point of territory had been recovered, from which others, under the Captain of their salvation, would push on the conquest; the Seed of the woman had bruised the serpent's head, and the seed would be as the stars of heaven, without number—who, through the power of that Triumph, and the power of the Cross, would reiterate the victory, and, in the language of the Apostle, bruise Satan shortly under their feet.

II. Hitherto we have been considering the cause of Satan's departure; we will now briefly notice how far this withdrawal was temporary. S. Luke adds, to the assertion that Satan "departed from Him," the significant limitation, "for a season."* It is evident, too, from our

* S. Luke iv. 13.

LORD'S words, that Satan's departure at the end of the Temptation was not final. Thus CHRIST announces Satan's return: "The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me."* Again, "Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out."† At the time of His arrest, CHRIST again referred to Satan's working: "This is your hour, and the power of darkness."‡ Whatever our LORD may have suffered from temptation during His Public Ministry, the approach of Satan in some especial and more vigorous manner was reserved for the Passion.

But the return at the time of the Passion differed from the first approach in the Temptation, in three respects. Satan would not again *visibly* attack CHRIST. It has already been said that it is the natural inference from the narrative of the Temptation that Satan was allowed to assume some form, so that he might bring himself before the eyes of CHRIST. The expressions which are used in the Divine record of this Mystery, to an unbiassed mind certainly imply a visible presence. But at the time of

* S. John xiv. 30. † S. John xii. 31.
‡ S. Luke xxii. 53.

CHRIST'S apprehension no visible form of the apostate angel asserted his presence amidst the traitorous mob, though his approach was revealed by the words of JESUS.

Again, Satan did not now draw near to *tempt* CHRIST. His failure in the wilderness was too complete to admit of a second attempt in that direction. Satan has two ways of approach; one by enticement, the other by persecution. If subtlety does not succeed, he resorts to violence. He had tried with all his might to make JESUS swerve from the path of righteousness by the allurement of false goods; now he will try Him by the presentation of evils. If he cannot draw us aside by the solicitation of pleasures, he will see what can be done by exciting our fears and testing our courage. He comes, first as the serpent; secondly, as the "roaring lion," "seeking whom he may devour."* He comes first in guile, lastly in rage; he comes first "to steal," and then "to kill and to destroy."† Some have thought that the change of temptations, or of the mode of tempting, is connected with some mysterious law which forbids evil spirits from repeating

* 1 S. Peter v. 8. † S. John x. 10.

the same temptation in the case of a person whom they have once attacked, and by whom they have been repulsed; and consequently that by our victories over the powers of darkness, there is a real diminution of the forces of the Enemy; but Holy Scripture does not seem to support this opinion. The return of the evil spirit to the house whence he came out, in bodily *possession*, appears to include the lesser under the greater, and so to affirm a repetition of *temptation* from the same foe who had once been overthrown. However, in the instance of our LORD, the defeat was so thorough as to leave no room for a renewal of that form of attack; it only remained, therefore, for Satan to draw near in the way of violence.

We may conclude from the statements of Holy Scripture as to Satan's departure and return, that in the interval our LORD was comparatively free from such direct personal assaults as we have been contemplating, although manifold temptations would come to Him indirectly, from surrounding circumstances and through others, thereby rendering His Life one of perpetual trial; a fact to which He alluded, when on the eve of His Passion He tenderly referred to His

disciples as to those who had continued with Him during His temptations.

Now, it may be said, 'Does not this intermission of direct temptation render our LORD'S Life different from our own, in that our life is one of continuous temptations?' To this it may be replied in two ways. First, that the account which we give of our own temptations is often exaggerated and fallacious. We confuse trials with temptations, and the evil of our own hearts with the fiery darts of the enemy. To say that Satan is uninterruptedly tempting us, is to contradict the statements of those who deserve to be heard, because they have an experimental acquaintance with the spiritual life. We learn from them, that there are times of peace as well as times of war, and how the one should be used as a preparation for the other. "Satan walketh about seeking whom he may devour."* He does not unceasingly attack the same soul. There are those who can mark exactly the commencement, continuance, and end of certain forms of temptation from which—except at such times—they are free, and for which they have no lasting propensity. As in

* 1 S. Peter v. 8.

severe illness, GOD graciously vouchsafes seasons of comparative relief, so that the sufferer may recruit his forces a little as he meets each fresh measure of his trial; so, in spiritual conflicts, the same loving Providence arranges intermissions, that our strength may be equal to our day. Secondly, it must be remembered (as we have said before), that in the Life of CHRIST all the different vocations, experiences, and conditions of human life find some point of contact with His Life, and are represented by some particular period or aspect of it. Each experience is intensified, and, as it were, condensed, so that it contains within itself all its varieties, and reaches out to the whole extent of human life. Thus it was with His Birth, Infancy, Home Life, Public Life, Suffering Life, Death; and so is it with the Mystery of the Temptation. As the absence of human ailments and diseases was compensated by the representative Sufferings of the Passion, so—setting aside the ordinary trials of His Life—CHRIST gathers up into His struggle with the flesh, the world, and the devil, in the Temptation, those conflicts which, it may be, with us are spread out in milder forms over the greater portion of our life.

His Divinity rendered each experience of His Manhood a permanent acquisition; whereas our experiences need ceaseless repetition, or else they fade away and are forgotten.

A third respect in which Satan's approach in the Passion differed from that in the Temptation, will be found in the *indirectness* of the attack. The encounter in the desert was between CHRIST and Satan, without the intervention of any other person; but Satan's assaults at Gethsemane and Calvary were through the agency of the evil passions of men. "This is your hour, and the power of darkness,"* are words which express the order in which Satan's fury reached our LORD. Satan seems to have made a special onset upon the disciples of CHRIST, especially on Judas and on S. Peter. "Satan entered into Judas;"† Satan desired to have S. Peter,‡ that he might sift him as wheat. Behind Chief Priests, Pharisees, Herod, Pilate, soldiers, mob, we trace the fierce activity of the Personal Spirit of Evil as he stimulated human corruption, and rendered it an apt and ready

* S. Luke xxii. 53. † S. Luke xxii. 3.
‡ S. Luke xxii. 31.

instrument of his will. Our LORD had condemned the spirit of sensuality, pride, and worldliness in the Temptation, and now in turn the spirit of sensuality, pride, and worldliness condemns Him. For what is the Tribunal of Herod but the representation of sensuality? What is the Tribunal of Caiaphas but that of pride? And what is the Tribunal of Pilate but that of worldliness? We seem to descry behind them the Evil One, taking reprisals for his threefold defeat in the Temptation. Thus, Satan's absence was but "for a season;" and then he returned again to attack CHRIST; on this last occasion not as at the first, but invisibly, violently, and indirectly.

III. As in the beginning of the Temptation, after Heaven had opened from above, Hell soon opened from beneath, so now when Hell closes, Heaven opens again—"Behold, angels came and ministered unto Him." What a marvellously sudden change of experiences! Let us see what may be learnt from the arrival of the angels, both as to their interest in the Temptation, and their relations with us.

Angels appear in the different Mysteries of the Life of CHRIST. One comes to the Blessed

Virgin Mary, to announce the Mystery of the Incarnation; one comes to S. Joseph, to explain the Mystery, and to bring the Holy Name; a multitude sing the "Gloria in excelsis," above the fields of Bethlehem, on the night of the Nativity; one comes to suggest the flight into Egypt; one, to reveal that the return to the land of Israel might be made in safety; one comes to strengthen CHRIST in His Agony; angels move too and fro in the Garden of the Resurrection; angels form a portion of His triumphal procession, as the God-man passes up to the Mediatorial Throne; angels are to accompany Him, as He descends for Judgment; and angels *minister* to Him when the Temptation was ended.

First, we may regard them as coming to congratulate CHRIST, after His victory over the Foe. Surely, if it was the same Evil Spirit against whom Michael in his zeal for GOD'S honour had contended, the angels who kept their first estate would now rejoice at his overthrow. If 'the stars in their courses' fight against Sisera, they would gather together to minister to Him through whom Sisera had fallen. If they rejoice when one sinner repenteth, what

must have been their exultation when a Triumph had been gained which would affect the whole of the Redeemed?

Again, we may regard them as coming to CHRIST from disinterested love for us, desiring that, by virtue of CHRIST'S Victory, we may also be victorious, and may attain the end for which we were created, and be sharers with them in glory—perhaps filling up the gap, as it was anciently thought, which the fallen angels had made in their choirs. They love us, because we are created in GOD'S image, and are objects of CHRIST'S Redeeming Love, and are fellow-creatures who on one side of our being have affinity with them.

They came, too, because of their love for CHRIST. They are represented as thirsting to know more and more of GOD through the Mystery of the Incarnation. As the cherubims in the tabernacle were so placed as to bend over the Mercy-seat, as if engaged in continually contemplating it; so, into the Life of CHRIST, S. Peter tells us, "the angels desire to look."* *They* gain by the Incarnation: a created nature, though different

* 1 S. Peter i. 12.

from their own, brings GOD nearer to them; for the interval between GOD and the creature is infinite, but that between one nature and another is finite. Thus, on CHRIST, on the Church, on the soul, the angels gaze; because through the Mysteries of grace they draw nearer to GOD, and gain some fresh views of His Nature. They had loved CHRIST as 'the Word' from their creation, now they minister to Him as 'the Word made flesh.'

They come, too, to honour GOD; as one of old says, "CHRIST was tempted of the Devil, because He was man; was honoured, too, by angels, because He was GOD." It is not said they came from heaven, but simply they came to Him, as if they were but a little way off, and waiting to draw near to CHRIST, but not allowed to do so until the conflict was past, so that CHRIST might alone confront the Foe.

Moreover, the ministration of angels on this occasion teaches us the dignity of human nature, when that nature is faithful in its conflict with the Enemy. Victory over temptation brings us to the fellowship of the angels. There is a reflection of this truth in every soul; when a temptation has been overcome, a

sensation of heavenly joy and peace arises which is a present reward, and the foretaste of an abiding one hereafter. The Incarnation altered the relative position of human and angelic natures. In their original position, in the scale of being, the angels occupied a place above man; but through the Incarnation and Exaltation of Human Nature in CHRIST, they now minister to humanity as to a superior nature. It has been noticed, in illustration of this change of position, that when Abraham bowed himself to the ground* before the angels, he was not rebuked; but when S. John "fell down to worship before the feet of the angel"† he was forbidden to do so: "See thou do it not." Thus the vision, promised to Nathanael—"Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of GOD ascending and descending upon the SON of MAN"‡—could receive its twofold fulfilment: and angels ascend to that Nature which by union with Godhead had mounted above them; whereas by their place in the scale of being they could descend upon a nature which was in itself "a little lower than" theirs.

CHRIST, through this struggle and victory,

* Gen. xviii. 2. † Rev. xxii. 8. ‡ S. John i. 51.

had formed a fresh link of union with the angels; they too had passed through a mysterious trial, and the attempt of Lucifer to make them swerve from the path of righteousness had failed in their case as in His; and they were indebted to Him for the grace which had its antecedent effect, in rendering them faithful, and in enduing them with perseverance.

The Temptation shows how human nature stands between Heavenly and Satanic influences, and rises or falls as it yields to the one or to the other. S. James describes these influences by "the wisdom which is from above;" and the "wisdom" which is "not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish."* In the latter we cannot fail to discern the three temptations—the 'sensual,' that is, the desires of the flesh, in the first; the 'devilish,' that is, pride, in the second; the 'earthly,' that is, avarice, in the third. When man responds to the higher influence he places himself in accord with Heaven, and by each victory is in some degree transformed; when man willingly falls under temptation, he is thereby degraded. Man, when he was in honour, had no understanding,

* S. James iii. 15–17.

and—by yielding to temptation, became like unto the beasts that perish; that is, no longer took grace and reason for his guides, but lived according to the dictates of passion.

This Mystery of Temptation, and the ministration of angels at its close, must not be looked upon as an exclusive experience of CHRIST, but as an ordeal through which we all have to pass, that the grace and glory which CHRIST stored up by His Conflict, might redound to us. His Temptation—as other Mysteries of His Life—was not merely a vicarious suffering to which we may look as a cordial wherewith to comfort ourselves when our conscience accuses us of unfaithfulness; but was to be an exhaustless source of power and sympathy, which we were to turn to account in manfully resisting temptations ourselves.

Victory over temptation in union with CHRIST purifies, increases, perfects the spiritual life. Temptation may result from past sin, and be a punishment for it; and then, if faithfully endured, it *purges* the soul by its searching fire: I "will refine them as silver is refined, and try them as gold is tried."* Temptation may be

* Zech. xiii. 9.

the raw material from which *virtues* are formed. Evil is thus in the Providence of GOD made to minister to good; faith is deepened and defined, humility sustained, patience made possible, conformity cultivated through trial, and the soul at last perfected in *union* with God. The branch which abides in CHRIST is purged, that it may bring forth more fruit. Without temptation, the manufacture of virtues would cease, and the life become stagnant and listless. The peace which surrounded Solomon in the close of his days, exposed him to evils which might have been prevented by the presence of enemies at his gates. As Cato once said, 'it would be a bad day for Rome when Carthage was destroyed,' so may it be said, that it would be a real misfortune to the spiritual life, if it had no longer need to put out its energies to resist the powers of evil. The 'City of GOD' is strengthened by the attacks of the city of Evil, and resistance keeps it in vigorous health. Virtues are formed by acts, and habits are the results of successive acts; as each resistance to a temptation demands a definite movement of the will in correspondence with Divine grace, so each conquest strengthens the virtuous habit in the soul,

gains an increase of grace, and a proportionate increase of glory. Thus S. James says, "Count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations,"* for "blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life."

We have each one a part, then, in this mighty struggle between good and evil. As CHRIST'S Temptation brings us within the reach of His sympathy, and obtains for us the grace of resistance, so does it furnish us with an Example of the way in which we should meet the Evil One. CHRIST was Tempted after His Baptism, after His sojourn in the desert, after His Fast; we must prepare for temptation, in the power of the Sacraments, by prayer, by occasional retirement from the world, by mortification. In the moment of temptation, CHRIST used promptness, perseverance, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of GOD; we must resist at once, we must expect a repetition of temptations, and not by one victory be elated and thrown off our guard; and we must store up in our memory passages from Holy Scripture. This latter weapon, which CHRIST

* S. James i. 2.

used on each occasion, S. Augustine is said to have so greatly prized, that when he was sick "he caused the seven Penitential Psalms to be painted on the wall over against him in large letters, that if he should become speechless, yet he might point to every verse when the devil came to tempt him." After Temptation, CHRIST had fellowship with the angels: so must we be watchful against vain-glory after a victory; that is, of attributing it to ourselves; and must keep the mind in harmony with the blessed spirits, receiving humbly the light and joy which Heaven bestows, without any reflection on past successes.

We must remember that the Evil One departs but "for a season;" and that we have not only to rise above the temptations of enticement, but also may have to face temptations which come at last through suffering and death. Our faithfulness under the former will be a pledge of victory over the latter; whereas failure now will lead to a greater overthrow hereafter. If we cannot overcome when faculties are vigorous, what can we expect to "do in the swelling of Jordan"? But if during life we are faithful in resisting evil, and overcoming evil with good,

then in some measure we may meet the last struggle with the confidence to which CHRIST gave utterance, when He said, "The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me."

"The battle is the LORD'S!"* We fight against His enemies as well as ours; we fight in the presence of the Captain of our salvation; we fight in union with the Seed of the woman, who has already bruised the serpent's head; we fight in the power of the Spirit; the hosts of Hell are confronted by the greater hosts of Heaven, so that we need not fear but that good will triumph over evil, and that the mystery of the permission of evil will be found at the last to have been productive of greater good, as in CHRIST the Temptation led to a ministration of the angels, such as He had not, as Man, known before. Let each one be faithful to his share in the conflict, and the result will be the same; as the dark shadows of evil depart, bright forms of pure and blessed spirits will loom from above to welcome the soul, as it passes beyond the reach of temptation, into that Realm, where "the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest." †

* 1 Sam. xvii. 47. † Job iii. 17.

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